

Spring 5-2011

"Reading" The Apprentice: Commerce, Culture, and the Manufacturing of Reality

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The University of Southern Mississippi

“READING” *THE APPRENTICE*:
COMMERCE, CULTURE, AND THE MANUFACTURING OF REALITY

by

Sharon Simpson Terrell

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2011

ABSTRACT

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COMMERCE, CULTURE, AND THE MANUFACTURING OF REALITY

by Sharon Simpson Terrell

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This study examines the six original seasons of the reality television series *The Apprentice* as a postmodern, cultural artifact. Grounded in Burke’s (1967) “literature as equipment for living,” and Brummett’s (1984) consideration that televised content constitutes literature, the theory of “televised discourse as equipment for living” provided the guide to examine the series. Hall’s (1980) “reading against the grain” oppositional reading technique was utilized to interrogate both the manifest and latent content. The content of the series may indeed provide the audience with a guide to ideological beliefs of both commerce and culture, thereby creating a manufactured reality for its viewers. Discussions include the genre of reality television, marketing techniques that utilize modern sponsorship with product/brand placement, consumerism, social commentary, business discourse, and the mythos of the American Dream.

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A Dissertation
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May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the Mass Communication and Journalism faculty of the University of Southern Mississippi for all of its contribution to this project. I am forever grateful for their support that allowed me to continue my academic journey. I extend a special acknowledgement to my dissertation director, Dr. Chris Campbell, for his passion of social and communication studies and his insight throughout this process. I also extend my gratitude to the other members of my committee, Dr. Fei Xue, for his dedication to the art of advertising, Dr. Kim LeDuff, for her guidance and dedication, Dr. Dave Davies, for his dedication to historical methods, and Dr. Gene Wiggins for his Southern humor, lightheartedness, and dedication as both professor and administrator.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my husband for his love and support throughout many years of my pursuit of educational goals. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their generous love and support. And lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Hazel Cole, for being a trusted friend and colleague that offered guidance on emerging from the doctoral process, not only accomplished, but whole.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Peruse any television guide and it would be difficult to miss the sheer number of “reality television” programs littered across the television landscape. Many critics had believed that reality television (RTV) would most likely constitute a fad in programming, and fall by the wayside. However, the current has proven to flow in the opposite direction of the critics’ predictions. Viewer interest has risen in this type of programming, and networks have adopted it with fervor. In fact, RTV programs ranked second in the top two categories of the most-viewed types of television programs of 2009, eclipsed only by the broadcast of live sporting events (“Reality, Sports and SciFi,” 2009). The RTV genre has emerged as a multi-faceted phenomenon that has left an indelible footprint on network/cable programming. It has also become a staple of postmodern American popular culture, having been woven into the veritable American zeitgeist.

The presence of reality-based programming on prime-time television has clearly changed the way that people watch television, and also changed what people expect to see each night when they turn the television on (Butsch, 2006). As boundaries are crossed, genres mixed and hybrids created, at times this can result in serious journalism being peppered with the latest fluff details of the happenings on RTV. One such national television broadcast reported on the latest roadside bomb that had killed eleven troops in Afghanistan. The serious report on the nation's affairs, segued into a story about Snookie, a character on the MTV-produced, low-brow RTV program *Jersey Shore*, and the fact that she had gotten into a drunken brawl that ended in a man punching her in the face.

If one has not followed at least one RTV program over the years, be it *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, *American Idol*, or a host of others, print, newscasts, entertainment news,

and the Internet, are replete with the reporting of the minutia of the unfolding drama of many of these programs. Because of the vast reach of these programs and the press that they create, even if one does not watch these programs as part of their television viewing, they probably know some of the outrageous storylines and characters. Biressi and Nunn (2005, p. 11), refer to RTV as *water cooler TV*; that is, television that attracts large audiences and becomes part of the popular discourse of everyday life. Public opinion does vary about RTV programming, but generally they tend to be polarizing and people either “love it” or “hate it.”

These programs are pointedly marked by their misnomer of “reality TV” as they begin with the promise of “presenting the real,” but fall short, opting instead for a bait-and-switch technique that results in a manufactured television reality. This creation of RTV can be particularly troubling when the information that is presented as real to the viewing audiences is not. The drama is cleverly positioned to deflect any suspicion of the constructed reality that the viewers are watching. However, even if viewers were aware that what they are watching is not real, surveys have shown that many viewers simply do not care about the verisimilitude of what they are viewing (Murray & Ouellette, 2009). The real danger lies in the socialization from the manifest and latent content that is contained in the text of the program. Messages can create alignment or support pre-existing hegemonic ideas and ideals about society. These programs may indeed set up its own paradigm of relative RTV hegemony. This has created a need for researchers to address the economic, visual and cultural dimensions of RTV.

At times, scholars ignore highly popularized culture media products such as RTV. These programs may be dismissed as fad or low-brow television fare, not deserving of

scholarly attention. However, with the rapid rise of RTV to the forefront of popular culture and its substantial domination in the production of primetime programming, it has emerged as a significant social text. Scholars have begun to assess the genre's intersection with audiences, media economics, and its cultural relevance (Andrejevic, 2004; Holmes & Jermyn, 2004; Kraszewski, 2004; LeBesco, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Stern, 2009, p. 52) Some scholars have been diligent in analyzing not only the phenomenon of RTV, but also the rich content of RTV programs. Murray and Ouellette are a team of scholars that are constantly expanding the literature by seeking out research on RTV theory. Their presentation of essays have been invaluable to this research.

This study used a multi-disciplinary approach of marketing, mass communication, consumerism, business, and social analysis. This study will examine *The Apprentice*, a popular and highly successful reality TV series, and the ways in which its manifest and latent messages, along with its artificiality, that by the utilization of its televisual discourse. All six seasons of *The Apprentice* series will be examined for both manifest and latent messages of commerce and social commentary using textual analysis. Discussions about the series will include the series' contribution to marketing techniques in the genre of reality television, and social televisual discourse that includes consumerism, ethnicity, gender, ageism, stereotyping, business discourse, and the myth of the elusive American Dream. A complete picture emerges of *The Apprentice* and its success as a holistic marketing vehicle with a powerful potential to affect the viewers with respect to social discourse.

The literature review revealed that *The Apprentice* text was generally analyzed as business discourse. Of the studies that have used *The Apprentice* as televisual discourse,

the ones that are the most germane to this study are Duffy and Brennen (2006), Lair (2007), and McGuigan (2008). They all used a wider realm of social semiotics to analyze *The Apprentice*. However, none of these studies to date have applied a social semiotics paradigm using textual analysis to the entire six season run of the U.S. version of *The Apprentice*. This six season unit represents a complete package of the program, thereby presenting the full arch of development from the program's inception through its peak, and eventually end.

The entire series of *The Apprentice* may well be a manifesto for commentary about how Americans should conduct their lives. The proposed research will not only answer the research questions, but also add to the study of reality TV, brand placement and semiotics, and dissect what is proposed to be a significant social text that seems to be a clear artifact of contemporary twenty first century America. This project was guided by the following research questions that were constructed as a result of the literature review:

RQ1: How does *The Apprentice* use brand placement and integration techniques?

RQ2: How does *The Apprentice* contribute to consumerism?

RQ3: How does *The Apprentice* portray reality?

RQ4: What social commentary is present in *The Apprentice*?

Theoretical Grounding

Textual analysis is a common methodology to use in media studies, as well as a central methodology of cultural studies (McKee, 2003). Textual analysis, as a research tool, seeks to prod beneath the surface of the denotative meanings and examine more implicit and connotative social meanings. Textual analysis approaches often view culture as a narrative or story-telling process in which particular "texts" or "cultural artifacts"

consciously or unconsciously link themselves to larger stories at play in the society.

According to Byars (1991), mainstream entertainment texts cannot be divorced from the material conditions in which they are produced and consumed. They are not simply texts, but participants in an ongoing ideological process.

Popular texts are described as those that appeal to a large, heterogeneous audience and must be polysemic, with a variety of potential meanings. Textual analysis is used to discover and illuminate those potential meanings within a text. Instead of looking at “one truth” the method seeks the differences within the text that create polysemic readings. The use of textual analysis provides a useful means of examining texts for the social constructs presented within them. As Leff and Sachs (1990) noted, rhetorical texts create a reality for the consumer through the assignment of meaning to experiences shared by the group as a whole. Examining these texts for their inherent social constructs increases the researcher’s understanding of the impact of these programs and the messages they transmit to an audience (Holmes, 2007, p. 12).

Mainstream entertainment texts solidify the production of our culture; they produce our social reality. The texts are responsible for creating the content of our culture and determining what is meaningful. Society digests the messages, interprets it and internalizes it. It is through this process that the production of meaning is manufactured (Lacy, 1998). Meehan (1999) suggests, “reading against the grain” thereby becomes tantamount to fighting capitalism. This reduces capitalism from a political economic system to a preferred, albeit oppressive, mode of interpreting texts” (p. 153). Meehan believes that as scholars it is “our job is to deconstruct, reveal, and critique” (Meehan, p. 162).

Ideological analysis is an important aspect of this project. As such, the analysis is derived from “interpreting the interpretations” (Carey, 1989, p. 60). Carey referenced the deeper meanings that are inherent in media texts. As television has the capacity to make meaning, it is important to examine it and interpret cultural myths as meaning-making systems that help explain societal attitudes, behaviors and ideologies. A more appropriate means of getting at the root of these myths seems to be through qualitative approaches to the research. Interpretive qualitative research allows for a reading of media texts in the context of larger cultural meanings (Campbell, 1995, p. 5).

The interrogation of media texts, proceeds from the cultural studies of Fiske (1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1989), Gilroy (1992), and Hall (1992), who are encouraged by its “special intellectual promise” (Nelson, Treicher & Grossberg, 1992, p. 1). Cultural studies specifically considers the ideological and discursive struggles within media culture and the ways that people understand and cope with the world (Fiske, 1989). Regardless of whether considering social or economic issues, cultural studies unmasks the deeply embedded power structures that attempt to sustain dominant ideologies. In this regard, the cultural studies model can facilitate a meaningful critique of RTV (Bell-Jordan, 2008, p. 354).

Fiske views criticism as a political activity and encourages “readings” of popular texts that are grounded in the resistance to the opposition of the dominate message (Burns & Thompson, 1989, p. 3). Hall (1980), a seminal author in semiotics, also tackles the issue of the way in which people make sense of media texts through readings. Hall contends that those in control of media texts, construct them to deliver a “preferred reading” that aligns with the dominant ideology. A preferred meaning supports the

dominant ideology, by way of economics, power, control, and in the maintenance of the status quo. Secondly, Hall contents that readings of media texts can also take a “negotiated reading” turn. People may recognize that there are differing viewpoints to take into consideration, instead of blindly following the dominant ideology (Hall, p. 137).

The third type of reading in Hall’s paradigm is the decided “oppositional reading,” which involves direct conflict with the material being presented. This type of reading is produced by those whose social position puts them into direct conflict with the preferred reading. An oppositional reading “detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference (Hall, 1980, p. 138). It results in a rejection of the material on its face, and allows for meanings to be reconfigured.

Prosise and Johnson (2004) believe that scholars interested in reality television programming should consider the actual media content. The theoretical basis that was used for their study of racial profiling in crime-based reality TV programs was derived from Kenneth Burke’s (1967) research. According to the Burkean model, the concept of the “representative anecdote” involves a generalized drama that provides a series of lessons and expectations for the audience (Prosise & Johnson, p. 74). Burke (1967) interrogated literature as “equipment for living.” Brummet (1984) expanded Burke’s definition to also include the texts of televised forms of communication. The televised content that results from this representative anecdote contains discourse for “equipment for living” that offers a guide to allow people to cope with and understand their world (Prosise et al. p. 74; Burke, 1967). Prosise et al. found that reality television drama can provide a series of lessons and expectations for the viewers (p. 74). The concern is the

ideas and statements that shape the viewing in RTV programming (Matheson, 2005, p. 107).

Methodology

To answer the proposed research questions, a qualitative method was used to analyze *The Apprentice*. Questions concerning meaning making cannot easily be answered in quantitative terms. A more appropriate means of getting at the root of these myths seems to be through qualitative approaches to the research. Interpretive qualitative research allows for a reading of media texts in the context of larger cultural meanings (Campbell, 1995, p. 5). Since qualitative research is characterized by an emphasis on describing, understanding and explaining complex phenomena, it is the clear choice with which to analyze the content of this program, providing a full multi-dimensional view of the multiple-layered televisual content.

The use of textual analysis as a qualitative method for examining *The Apprentice* television series was utilized to guide the research. The analysis provided a thorough reading of all six of the completed regular (non-celebrity) seasons of *The Apprentice* series. Each season contains approximately fifteen episodes rendering ninety episodes in total for all six seasons. The individual episodes as digital recordings provided the unit of analysis and the primary research materials for the textual analysis.

The six completed seasons of *The Apprentice* included comparing all episodes of Season One (January 8 – April 15, 2004), Season Two (September 9, 2004 – December 16, 2004), Season Three (January 20, 2005 – May 5, 2005), Season Four (September 22 – December 15, 2005), Season Five (February 27, 2006 – June 5, 2006), and Season Six (January 7 – April 22, 2007) of *The Apprentice*. The various seasons include

retrospective summary episodes and finale episodes. The finale is usually a special live presentation that takes place in a auditorium or theatre space in front of a live audience. The rest of the cast is assembled for the last chance for the final two contestants to convince Trump that he should select them for the coveted position with this company.

The seventh and eighth seasons of the program, *The Apprentice: Celebrity Apprentice*, were omitted from this study. Although it carries a similar title, the *Celebrity Apprentice* is in essence a spin-off of the original program. This is the second of such spin-offs, just as *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* was also considered a spin-off and not part of regular installments of the program. The *Celebrity Apprentice* installment carries an entirely different premise as “B-list” celebrities, not business contestants, are pitted against one another for a prize of \$250,000 that is awarded to their favorite charity, and not a personal appointment in Trump’s organization.

With the use of Hall’s oppositional reading technique, extensive notes were taken from viewing all ninety episodes. Each episode was viewed repeatedly on DVD in order to conduct a thorough reading and to absorb the nuances from each episode. The patterns were examined in a pretest of several episodes and were augmented when the actual analysis was conducted. Observable patterns were identified from observation and the episode notes. A chart was produced listing all of the in-program brand/products, and the sponsoring company.

A literature review was conducted using journal articles, all published *Apprentice* studies, periodicals, books, online magazines, and use of appropriate Internet searches and websites. Both primary and secondary materials are considered in the analysis including a twenty-five minute phone interview conducted by a member of *The*

Apprentice production team. In this interview I was screened as a perspective contestant. Having passed the initial approval stage, my application went on to advance further in the contestant selection process. As part of the process, the production team member sent a full questionnaire to be completed and returned. Along with the twenty-five minute interview, the questionnaire was also considered as a primary text in this research.

The results will be presented in narrative form, identifying themes and trends, providing examples from the episodes and appropriate analysis. The analysis is utilized to advance media studies by drawing a relevant link between media text, marketing communications and social messages with a potential to impact viewers perception, ideas and ideals. Since there is little research that explores the program from this paradigm, this research will explore the unique way that *The Apprentice* creates a perfect convergence of art and commerce that crafts this program into an effective marketing tool that is ripe with social commentary.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reality Television as Media Anomaly

Rise of Reality TV

Any television guide would reveal the numerous programs that have been labeled as “reality TV” (RTV). When the current modern trend began, most believed that RTV would not be a mainstay in television programming. But RTV is cheap programming to produce, so the genre has taken hold due to favorable economic factors in a struggling television industry. Viewer interest has also risen in this type of programming, and has become a staple of American popular culture. Since the genre is cheap to produce and viewers have adopted it, networks have not hesitated to weave this programming into their schedules. The RTV genre has emerged as a phenomenon that has left an indelible mark on the history of American television.

These programs have been labeled real, but are anything but that. A more appropriate label would be “manufactured reality.” The creation that is RTV can be particularly troubling when the viewers believe that what they are witnessing is in fact real. The dramatic factor is woven through the fabric of characters and events, designed to hook viewers and deflect any suspicion of the constructed reality. The manifest and latent content that is contained in the text of the program has the potential to give rise to supplying the viewers with a guide to a paradigm of thought, creating a set of expectations of the way one should think and live. This has created a need for researchers to address the economic, visual and cultural dimensions of RTV.

The term “reality TV” describes a genre of television programming which presents unscripted dramatic or humorous situations. It has been described as a television program observing real people in live situations, often deliberately manufactured, and the monitoring of their emotions and behavior in those situations. It documents actual events, and generally features "ordinary" people over professional actors. The one consistent characteristic which underscores all of the program variations of RTV is a visible reference to and dramatization of the authentic and “the real” (Deery, 2004).

The commercial genre has existed in some form or another since the early years of television. The fascination to take a peek inside others lives seems irresistible to many. Even in the early years of television, programs offered a look into the lives of the contestants. Programs such as *Queen For A Day* and Allen Funt’s *Candid Camera* were some of the early pre-cursors of today’s RTV (Murray & Ouellette, 2004). *Queen For A Day* (1956-1964) showcased female contestants that were experiencing some type of hardship. The idea was to find the most heart-wrenching story, which constituted the drama factor, and have the female contestant explain the excruciatingly painful details of their misfortune. The contestants often cried while describing their individual circumstance. The host of the series, Jack Bailey, would announce the winning contestants by whomever elicited the most response from the audience based on applause as measured by an applause meter. When a contestant won, the dramatic display would entail the contestant being crowned, seated on a throne, and would then be given a solution to her immediate need, and additional prizes, provided by sponsors. Parallels can be drawn between the premise of this program and the contemporary RTV program

Extreme Makeover, in which families that are experiencing hardships are awarded a complete home makeover.

According to Loomis (n.d.), *Candid Camera* (1948-1967) was the first and longest running reality-based comedy program. The format of the program featured footage taken by a hidden camera of everyday people caught in hoaxes devised by the producers. The show's host, Allen Funt, would explain the set-up hoax to the viewers, which involved an unusual circumstance and would provoke reactions from unsuspecting passersby. The show was inspired by Funt's stint as a psychology research assistant at Cornell University. In a 1985 *Psychology Today* article, Funt explained his foray into television by remarking that he "wanted to go beyond what people merely said, and to record what they did - their gestures, facial expressions, confusions and delights" (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 44). The program was consistently rated as one of television's top ten shows. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, *Candid Camera* inspired a more contemporary genre of "reality programming," which included a RTV variant, *America's Funniest Home Videos* (1990-present). This program involves broadcasting edited, amateur videos that have been sent in by viewers, featuring a host that delivers humorous running commentary about the video clips and capturing studio audience reactions to the clips (Loomis, n.d.).

The main predecessor of contemporary RTV programming was the program *An American Family* (1973). This weekly PBS documentary aired in 1973 and chronicled the Loud family. The series was set in upscale Santa Barbara, California. The program featured edited footage that had been shot previously in 1971, and presented a contemporary family coping with social issues, including the disintegration of the parents

marriage and the outing of their gay son. This program set the stage for the next generation of RTV that would play heavily on the dramatic factor and also exploited social issues as grist for the RTV mill.

The program that would be directly inspired by *An American Family* was MTV's *The Real World* (1992-present). As purported by its title, the program was set to provide a "real" depiction of seven diverse young people that were strangers to one another, and how they would cope with living with one another. *The Real World* was groundbreaking in the emergence of many of the textual characteristics that would come to define the genre's contemporary form and it is considered to be the first contemporary RTV program (Murray & Ouellette, 2009, p. 4). Instead of using a nuclear family as was portrayed on *An American Family*, MTV would cast people from across the country and make them live together in a communal space. Obviously the mix of participants needed to be cast to provide a great amount of dramatic action for the cameras to record and for the producers to exploit.

In order to imbue authenticity, the program utilized documentary techniques such as the cinema verite style of shooting. This "over the shoulder" style of shooting conveys "the real" with slight movements of the camera person, just as if one was really there in person to view the action. The program gave a full presentation of conflict among the participants, but also stirred the drama with adding the element of "The Confessional." The Confessional is a space that RTV producers provide, to encourage and sometimes insist, that the participants offer their thoughts about the other participants on the show, offer commentary about events within the program, and ideas about their possible future action within the confines of the communal space. Later, this footage is used to help push

the dramatic action along. Mary-Ellis Bunim, one of the show's producers, is credited with the advent of this technique that has become a staple element of RTV programs. An additional characteristic that would also carry through to later RTV programming, is the invasive and voyeuristic placement of multiple cameras and microphones throughout the living space to capture all of the twenty-four hour action. Bunim/Murray Productions produced *The Real World*, and was co-founded by Mary-Ellis Bunim and Jonathan Murray. They are considered by many to be the pioneers of the contemporary RTV movement. Other notable programs that Bunim/Murray have produced include *Road Rules*, *The Simple Life*, *Project Runway* and *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*.

While MTV does attempt to cast multi-ethnic groups, there is little diversity in age, since it is paramount for MTV to maintain the practice of casting participants the same age as their target demographic range of eighteen to twenty-four year olds. The communal house that the participants are placed in is always decorated in a young, hip, upbeat fashion, generally very colorful and interesting to look at. A new city is featured for each season that adds a rich, textural background to the show and is presented as a sort of travelogue of the host city. The cast is shown cavorting at shopping venues, nightclubs, restaurants and other points of interest. Now on their twenty-fourth installment of the program, *The Real World New Orleans* began its broadcast in the summer of 2010. Despite its long run of twenty-four seasons, *The Real World* is still quite popular and maintains good viewership. It is MTV's longest running program.

In his essay on *The Real World*, Kraszewski (2004) contends that the program was born out of a MTV- PR image spin (p. 209-210). Originally, MTV refused to air Black music videos, arguing their mostly white audience would lack interest. As MTV

came under fire for this practice, they changed their policy, and began to try to repair their image. In an attempt to show diversity and tolerance, the program tackled controversial social issues such as sexuality, racism, prejudices and stereotypes. However, Kraszewski points out that these issues were at times created artificially by the producers. Kraszewski states that MTV has been known to juxtapose unrelated footage of the participants that actually create these points of drama over certain social issues. This type of artificial concoction is now a common technique used by RTV producers. In MTV's case, the explanations and resolutions themselves seemed to perpetuate the beliefs of commonly held prejudices and stereotypes, instead of dismissing them. As the seasons progressed, the need for more MTV-PR spin and commentary about social issues gave way to more salacious fare. This has emerged as the dominant focus, with ever-increasing negative behaviors being exhibited by the house inhabitants. The trend toward the salacious has also been retained as a convention of the RTV genre.

Survivor (2000-present) was the next notable program in the historical context of RTV. This program cast diverse participants, and in an effort to isolate the authentic experience, has built the program around bringing The *Survivor* contestants to remote, exotic locations around the world. Some of the locations have included China, Africa, Borneo, Guatemala and Fiji. After being introduced to one another in the remote location, the contestants are asked to form two tribes. The game proceeds with contestants getting to know one another and devising methods to work within their new environment. They are deprived of common human necessities such as food, shelter and fire in very inhospitable environs. The tribes engage in competitions that require endurance, strength and strategy. With the contestants extremely deprived, the drama is at a maximum fever

pitch. The contestants form alliances and align against contestants that are voted out weekly. This plays out in dramatic fashion in a night, fire-lit ceremony. The elimination continues until the last two survivors remain. A jury of cast-off contestants make the final decision between the two as to who will be named the “sole survivor.” The winner receives a one million dollar prize.

The *Survivor* production team is credited with inserting products/brands into the episodes, which in remote locations, is quite ironic, but adds to the punctuation of the promotion. The limited use of products/brands are usually offered up in the form of rewards for the winning team’s members. Starving contestants have been known to endure intense competitions for the opportunity to dine on snack food such as Doritos or the opportunity to drink a cold Mountain Dew (Hearn, 2009, p. 167). In another *Survivor* product/brand competition, the winners were allowed access to a Pontiac Aztek vehicle, for purposes of sleeping in and escaping the elements for one night. This brought about the return of sponsorship, albeit not in an all encompassing fashion which is seen both in early television and at its best in *The Apprentice*.

Mark Burnett, the producer of both *Survivor* and *The Apprentice*, is one of the major driving forces behind RTV, and as an entrepreneur, has pioneered the success of many other reality “unscripted” drama series (“Product Placement,” 2005; Yahoo TV, 2006b.) He has also produced *The Restaurant*, *The Contender*, *Eco-Challenge* and *Commando Nanny*. He is credited with making RTV a prolific, legitimate genre and a staple of American television fare (“Product Placement,” 2005). Disliking the term “reality TV,” Burnett has coined his own word to describe this genre - “drama-lity” television. Burnett teamed with Donald Trump and together they conceived of *The*

Apprentice (2004-2006; 2010-present) and still co-produce the series. Burnett has described *The Apprentice* as a program that “transcends normal TV” with its unique format and perspectives (Internet Movie Database, 2010a). While Burnett is a driving force in the progressive movement of RTV, ironically, he is returning to the past, with his ideas of RTV and commercial sponsorship.

The genre would have remained a fringe offering of television had it not been for a unique set of circumstances that allowed it to flourish and dominate. The RTV domination is born out of many changes in government regulations, organized labor disputes, the advent of new editing equipment, the fracturing of audience viewership, the changing modes of network revenue streams, and programming adaptability.

In examining how RTV came to dominate in the television world, it is necessary to return to the 1980s. In telecommunication history, the 1980s is a watershed that is marked by Reagan era deregulation. The idea was to loosen some of the regulations that had been in place for decades. The result was an overall reduction in FCC oversight of station and network operations. This was a period of change for the television industry as licensing periods were lengthened, opportunities for expanded ownership increased, a mandate in the reduction of the number of hours of mandatory non-entertainment programming, an elimination of the Fairness Doctrine, the amount of advertising that a station could carry increased, and changes with cable programming as competition to network programming. All of this resulted in television’s need to offer ever-increasing entertainment fare (Sterling, n.d.).

As the 1980s continued, studios were facing their share of adversity with the rapidly rising cost of production. A large percentage of this increase was primarily driven

up by the “above the line” production costs. This included the talent, writers, music composers, animators and the physical location costs. Included in the talent pool costs, were millions of dollars that the “stars” of film and television command (Bauer, 1986). However, production companies with many millions more on the line, wanted a proven star to help increase the chances of success of their production. This inflated the salaries even greater for stars with top billing and kept production costs high.

Distribution was another factor, as outlets for media products grew in number. As many distribution outlets were hungry for product, the amount of available advertising dollars that were previously on the table decreased. This factor, along with changes in the federal tax laws, took away many deductions that producers had used to add to their bottom line, causing networks to begin a series of cost-cutting strategies. Studios reduced their staff, their news divisions, and many cut “below the line” production workers which included technicians and engineers (Raphael, 2009).

The next step that the studios took was to bypass union labor in an attempt to weaken the power of the unions. This sparked many strikes by all of the major union and guilds in the industry. Productions were also moved to “right to work” states such as Louisiana to further bypass the use of union workers. Studios also benefited with the added bonus of beneficial tax incentives in these “right to work” states. This tactic is still being utilized by the studios, as out-of-state production continues to grow, and the South specifically is now known as “Hollywood South” due to this growth (Raphael, 2009, pp. 127-28).

RTV programs gained currency in an environment of relative financial scarcity. Economically, the genre fit the needs of producers and distributors alike for cheaper

programming as the programs are inexpensive to produce, which reduces their financial burden. One of the many reasons that RTV is cheaper to produce is that while actors are compensated for their appearances on RTV, that pay is minimal, effectively being considered a stipend. If celebrities are to be involved with the program, they usually are presented as a host, or unpaid guest, usually looking to generate PR or gain audience exposure, not a large salary. Another factor that reduces production costs is that RTV writers usually do not get paid union scale; this also results in lower production costs.

Cinema verite, shooting with handheld cameras, generally using available lighting, also saved in production costs. It presented a natural, over-the-shoulder look that is the hallmark of this technique, and lends itself to “authenticity” of the image being presented. While this was inexpensive, editing the footage with traditional linear editing equipment was quite time consuming and expensive. In order to produce a RTV program, hundreds of hours of video tape needed to be edited. It was expensive to pay editors for the amount of time that was required to sift through the hours of twenty-four-hour/seven-days-a-week footage. Then, in 1987, non-linear editing equipment, such as the Avid system, was developed. This digital process allowed for quick editing of hours of video footage. This gave RTV a huge push in the industry and became another hallmark of savings in its production scheme.

Along with budgets and advertising dollars shrinking, so the audience numbers were to follow. With increased competition from cable networks, audience became extremely fragmented. Audiences for programs such as *The Cosby Show*, *Seinfeld*, and *Friends* had set record numbers of viewers, but the previous domination of the large networks had crumbled as they struggled to deliver high numbers of viewers to

advertisers. Television programming began sliding down the scale of decline and has continued this decline. This is due in large part to continued audience fragmentation resulting from a vast array of cable channels, niche channels, the Internet and an increasing interest in gaming. Due to time-shifting, television viewers regularly record programs with digital recording equipment, such as Tivo. This time-shifting has resulted in viewers opting out of viewing the paid commercial advertisements.

As this fragmentation erodes the advertising base, this essential life's blood of television programming diminishes. The expanding RTV programming shifts this burden to creative in-program advertising that is financed by corporations, reprising the old model of sponsorship. For marketers, RTV attracts younger viewers in the much sought after demographic of eighteen to thirty-four year olds. For advertisers, this is the sweet spot of viewership. This demographic has grown up with RTV and they are very comfortable with it. Additionally, viewers generally relate to the lifestyle, age and social issues that are portrayed in RTV programming.

With the technological conventions that exist today, RTV can also be accessed in ancillary ways and packaged to meet viewer demands. Viewers are able to engage in multiple delivery and ancillary platforms that work to keep them involved with the program and its events. If viewers miss the action or storyline of any episode of their favorite RTV program, these loyal viewers can catch-up on fandom websites that have been built by individuals to give summaries of the action that took place on the program. Some networks actually offer free viewing of full episodes on their websites, such is the case with the newest *The Apprentice*. Some of the RTV programs, such as *Big Brother*, broadcast twenty-four hour live feeds via the Internet from the Big Brother house. This

program also offers an “after dark” television cable subscription service that broadcasts a four hour evening block of live feed from the Big Brother house. Both of these are summarized on fan-owned websites such as *Morty’s TV*, that offers extensive *Big Brother* reporting and commentary with Twitter tweets, message boards, and live chat that include viewers commenting on the program’s live minute-by-minute action. Some viewers time-shift and employ a DVR to record the “after dark” program for more convenient viewing. Some viewers purposely do not utilize the vast information on sites that provide information about the RTV programs, due to “spoiler” information.

In a world of free and instant communication, unauthorized blog site information or creative conjecture can prove to be precarious for producers. Some of these blog sites and other online spoiler sites profess to post “inside” information about production and plot twists (Lang, 2010). From the producers perspective, while it is a positive that viewers are engaging in the storyline, spoiler information that may be leaked takes storyline control away from the producers, or may present erroneous information about the program.

For those directly involved with the production, restrictive nondisclosure agreements that threaten legal action are usually enough to keep the most important plotlines from leaking out. However, with the proliferation of social media, newer controls have also been included forbidding the use of any social media during filming of the RTV program. If contestants are allowed to post online during production, the updates are closely monitored by the show's producers. Other controls include contestants being sequestered due to the fact that some interested viewers or paparazzi may track contestants as they go home and logically conclude the winner, and potentially leak the

information. In other cases, after production has ended, sometimes the winner is kept under tight security such was the case of *The Bachelorette* in the summer of 2010. Ali, the bachelorette selected her fiancé, Roberto, at the end of the season. With the last episode shot, but not aired, the two moved in with one another and remained sequestered with assistance from the producers until the finale aired. All of these efforts are made to protect the storylines integrity and protect the surprise elements of the programs.

The adaptability and flexibility of RTV programming has given the genre staying power. RTV can take many forms and change like a chameleon to suit the storyline, producers, locations and conditions. RTV is particularly useful as an inexpensive filler around expensive network sitcom and drama programming. With all of the factors discussed, including its lower than average risk and control of labor costs, this prolific genre continues to be a very attractive programming option for the television industry.

Notable successful and popular RTV programs:

The Real World – (1992--present) Contestants live in a communal house with the production team recording all of the interpersonal relationships and events that occur in the house.

Big Brother – (2000--present) Contestants live in an isolated communal house. Fifty-two cameras and ninety-five microphones record their every move. Contestants must strategize their way through games and challenges, form alliances, and maneuver through the house's social gauntlet to succeed. Cash and prizes are awarded throughout the series, but the last contestants wins a half million dollar prize.

Survivor – (2000--present) Contestants are brought to a remote, isolated area somewhere in the world, and must survive in the elements and compete with other

members in physical and strategy games for cash and prizes. Contestants are voted off by other members. The last contestant wins the title of Sole Survivor and one million dollars.

The Amazing Race – (2001--present) Teams of two-people couples (each team with a pre-existing relationship) compete to race around the world. Clues are given for each leg of the journey, and teams compete in tasks and in placement number. The last team in the competition wins one million dollars.

American Idol – (2002--present) A wide variety of contestants compete for the title of American Idol for the opportunity to begin their career in the music business. A panel of celebrity judges give comments, however, the public votes to keep contestants on the show.

The Bachelor/Bachelorette – (2002--present) These two programs are used interchangeably but have the same format. A bachelor/bachelorette is selected and contestants vie for their attention. The last contestant is paired with the eligible bachelor/bachelorette for a possible relationship. marriage.

Extreme Makeover – (2002--2007) Contestants went through an extensive makeover that included plastic surgery and cosmetic dentistry in the attempt to improve their lives.

America's Next Top Model – (2003--present) Female contestants compete for the title of America's Next Top Model and are given the chance to start their career in the modeling industry. A panel of judges, which includes the host, Tyra Banks, decide which contestants will be eliminated each week.

The Apprentice – (2004--present) Contestants are divided into two groups, both living in a communal suite, that must complete business tasks. Contestants are eliminated

from the losing group for each task. The last contestant wins the title of *The Apprentice* and is given a six-figure position within the Trump organization.

Project Runway – (2004--present) Contestants compete in specific clothes designing tasks that include restrictions in time, materials and theme. A panel of judges, which includes the host, Heidi Klum, decide which contestants will be eliminated each week.

Biggest Loser – (2005--present) Overweight contestants endure extensive weight training and dieting, competing in games and weight loss. The last contestant wins the title of The Biggest Loser and a cash prize.

Dancing with the Stars – (2005--present) celebrity contestants are paired with professional dancers to perform for a panel of judges that score the performances. The viewers vote, which is combined with the judges scores. The couple with the lowest score is eliminated from the competition.

From this list it is easy to identify the topics of interest to the American viewing public and indeed what sells these programs – talent, love, torment, interpersonal conflict and suspense. Most of the strong contenders, in one way or another, have a mixture of these elements infused into their programming.

The genre of RTV has become so reflexive that the satirical program *The Soup* (E! Network) is almost entirely devoted to the viewing of the RTV genre and the weekly production of clips from RTV programs across both network and cable programming. The host, Joel McHale, uses satirical commentary based on those RTV clips that have been pulled from the previous week's broadcast. In Escher-style, a television reality talk show, *The Soup*, centers around RTV programs, highlighting RTV series and the genre,

thereby promoting RTV programming and viewership interest, while satirizing it for its own use to produce *The Soup*. Some of the RTV programs that are highlighted regularly, are programs produced by or for the *E Network*, such as *The Kardashians*, *Pretty Wild* and *Kendra*, which adds another layer of promotion to the scheme.

Sub-Genres of Reality Television

The genre of RTV has become quite fragmented and can be grouped into specialized categories. Murray and Ouellette (2004, 2009) have developed a basic taxonomy of subgenres of RTV. Working with their original taxonomy of eight RTV subgenres, this study sought to reach a more full description of the subgenres, thereby allowing for greater flexibility of representing the current RTV landscape. The taxonomy here presents an expanded fourteen subgenres:

The Celeb-Reality Program presents celebrities that are shown as “ordinary” people on television. Examples include *Celebrity Apprentice*, *Celebrity Fit Club*, *Surreal Life* and *Get Me Out of Here!* While mostly the celebrities are depicted as “real people,” the situations are remarkable and consist of a contest or competition of some sort, setting up narcissistic celebrities with one another in an artificial setting, or “a fish out of water” scenario with celebrities. For some of these programs, viewers experience the satisfaction of celebrities getting their “come-uppance.”

The Charity Program is one that presents an attempt to improve the lives of the participants. Examples include *Pimp My Ride*, *Extreme Makeover Home Edition* and *Oprah’s Big Give*. These programs and their hosts tend to highlight the participants’ difficulties and hardship in life much like *Queen For A Day* did decades ago.

Consequently, these programs are commonly charged with exploitation of their subjects (Murray & Ouellette, 2004).

The Court Program presents judges that resolve small claims-based disputes between participants. Examples include *Judge Mathis*, *People's Court* and *Judge Judy*. Participants must remove their case from the legal system and subject to a private ruling in the case, by a judge that has left the bench. All travel and accommodations for the select participants are paid by the producers. The monies that are awarded in the cases are not paid by the losing participants, but are paid for out of a general fund from the show. Not only do these programs teach people about the law, but tend to govern citizens indirectly. The courtroom and the judge is presented as the authority on the way in which people should behave in society (Ouellette, 2009).

The Docusoap Program is one that uses many documentary conventions including cinema verite, with short narrative sequences akin to soap operas. Examples include *The Real World*, *The Surreal Life*, *High School Reunion*, *Real Housewives Series*, *Deadliest Catch* and *Sorority Life*. Along with short narrative sequences, other soap-opera-type structuring devices include multiple plot lines, cliff-hangers, use of a musical soundtrack, and a focus on character personality (Murray, 2009).

The Expert Guidance Program is one that uses the conventions of gaming and expert guidance in many different subject areas. Examples include *Wife Swap*, *Supernanny* and *The Biggest Loser*. People are brought in as experts in parenting, nutrition, fitness, domesticity and relationship management to assist the participants with particular issues they are experiencing (Ouellette, 2009, p. 5); the more outrageous the

behavior, the better the storylines for the program. Viewers often tune in to see the “train wrecks” of contestants’ lives and their behaviors.

The Gamedoc Program is one that presents a storyline that wraps around a game that the contestants play and compete in. Examples of these programs are *The Apprentice*, *Survivor*, *Big Brother*, *The Amazing Race*, *Project Runway* and *Fear Factor*. This subgenre borrows some textual characteristics from documentary filmmaking such as cinema verite, but is more closely aligned with game shows (Murray, 2009, p. 67). This genre was born out of the Docusoap, so it is generally laced with storylines that include the interpersonal relationships within the group, which is followed throughout the program. Media ritual conventions include the “confessional,” and actual formal ceremonies (Couldry, 2008). There is an underlying belief that even in this “made for television” environment, it is plausible to read “human reality” (Couldry, 2008, p. 89).

Additional analysis of the subgenre Gamedoc program reveals a group of programs that have a storyline that revolves around the complexities of operating a business in the RTV environment. Competitors perform a variety of tasks based on the particular skill presented in the program, then they are judged, and kept or eliminated by an expert or a panel of experts. Some examples of these programs are *The Apprentice*, *Family Business*, *The Restaurant*, *Shear Genius*, *Hell’s Kitchen*, *Ace of Cakes* and *Cake Boss*.

The Hidden Camera Program is one that uses the convention of hidden surveillance to observe participants reactions. Examples include *Punk’d* and *Scare Tactics*. Staged setups are depicted and much like their predecessor, *Candid Camera*, the focus is the way that people will react when they are unaware of being filmed. The

secondary reaction is how the participant will react upon the reveal that they have just been filmed and have reacted to false circumstances.

The Hoax Program is one that satirizes reality television conventions. Examples include *Reno 911*, *The Office* and *My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiancé*. The staged situations includes mostly actors. Along with the satire, the program capitalizes on voyeuristic tendencies and the popular appeal of these programs (Ouellette, 2009, p. 5). Some of these programs are contrived and acts as a parody of RTV programs and made to look like “reality” while others truly are attempting to deceive individuals. For the latter type which can entail practical jokes and humiliation, prizes are often given to the duped individuals to avoid an unpleasant backlash for having been deceived.

The Law Enforcement Program presents crime situations and criminals. Examples include *Cops* and *America’s Most Wanted* and teaches the viewing public about villains, evil, and morality and blurs the line between news and entertainment. These programs present the “reality” of police work and provide a series of lessons, expectations, myths, and models for audiences. While most people have not been touched by serious types of crime, these programs tend to propagate fear of the unknown criminal and their acts (Prosise & Johnson, 2004).

The Makeover Program presents experts that give participants specific advice, services, and merchandise to attain a specific goal. Examples include *Extreme Makeover*, *The Swan*, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, *What Not to Wear* and *While You Were Out*. Often the program presents someone who is attempting to overcome a personal struggle or goal to achieve something they really want. In many cases RTV programs that deal with the issue of self-improvement are often in contest format with many shows pitting

teams, or other people in search of drastic self-improvement, against one another. For example a popular self-improvement RTV show is *The Biggest Loser*. Families, friends, or others who have weight loss issues compete in a contest to see which team or person can lose the largest percentage of body fat. *The Swan* was one program that drew much controversy. This program departed from simple makeover and lifestyle changes and presented women undergoing various types of plastic surgery, including breast implants and liposuction, and other drastic procedures in order to improve themselves. Many suffered from general lack of self-esteem and had to endure months of painful procedures for the program.

The Reality Investigation Program is one that uses a program host to unravel the unknown and at times uses surprise tactics or hidden cameras. Examples include *Room Raiders*, *To Catch a Thief*, *Cheaters* and *Ghost Hunters*. The host usually is not an expert in the field and acts to provide the narrative of the story and to guide the audience through the investigation process. Evidence is produced and the host brings everything to a conclusion at the end of the program.

The Reality Sitcom Program adheres to generic sitcom conventions, purposely using family values as its foundation, against the backdrop of celebrity lives. Examples include *The Simple Life*, *The Osbourne's*, *The Anna Nicole Show*, *Family Jewels* and *Fat Actress*. Americans are obsessed with celebrities. This gives them a voyeuristic peek into the “reality” of celebrity lives. While the excess of wealth is shown, it is not the central focus - the family is the central focus. Today, we have Ozzy Osbourne and Gene Simmons from KISS fame as the new Ward Cleaver's of a new generation (Fogel, 2009).

The Romance Program centers around the activity and drama of dating and romance between participants. Examples include *Blind Date*, *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, *Rock of Love* and *Beauty and the Geek*. These programs bring people together in romantic situations, with variations among programs. There are dating game shows, where contestants have little or no previous knowledge of each other prior to production. Each season or episode has a new set of contestants or matches. Most shows have an elimination taking place over the course of a season, with contestants competing for the love of an eligible, prized person. *The Bachelor* presents a group of women competing for a millionaire, and in *Rock of Love*, women similarly vie for the attention of 80s glam rock star Bret Michaels. Shows like this often become franchises, resulting in second and third seasons. This type of program requires “performing gender,” perpetuates stereotyping among gender, and advances the myths of the “knight in shining armor,” or finding “Cinderella, the perfect woman” (Gray, 2009).

The Talent Contest is one that presents participants that compete to win a title and prizes. Examples include *American Idol*, *Star Search*, *America’s Top Mode*, and *So You Think You Can Dance*. The program *Star Search* is responsible for bringing the amateur talent contest to television. *American Idol* is one of the most popular programs in this subgenres. *American Idol* is the modern example of a talent-based RTV contest because it involves every day people trying to do an extraordinary thing. The prize usually involves money or a segue into the industry that the competition is based on. Winners of a singing competition wins a record deal, and designers get notoriety and money to start their own fashion lines.

This taxonomy is one way of describing the RTV genre to gain a greater understanding. These subgenres are not mutually exclusive as there is overlapping of these subgenres and some variations among the categories. However, the factor that ties all of these subgenres together is RTV's professed abilities to more fully provide viewers a real, unmediated, voyeuristic look. The fixation with "authentic" personalities, situations, problems and narratives is considered to be RTV's primary distinction from fictional television and is its primary selling point. (Ouellette, 2009b, p. 5)

Product/Brand Sponsorship, Placement and Integration

Historically, artists and writers are not financially and commercially driven. The most important aspect for them is the integrity of the art. However, those that produce intellectual properties know that in order to keep producing their art, they need to rely on those that can provide them with financial backing. In the realm of film and television, producers begin with the products created by these artists, the writers. Producers want to sell successful media products to media outlets, and rely on these writers to help them do so. However, the cost of production of media products creates a vacuum for the producers. Seeking sponsors, with products to sell, was a logical place to look for assistance with the ever-increasing rises in production costs and to fill that gap.

Product/brand placement represents the intersecting of the financial and creative realms, or of art and commerce. The term product/brand placement refers to the practice of inserting a paid inclusion of a brand name product, package, signage or other trademark merchandise, either through audio and/or visual means, within mass media programs (Karrh, 1998). An advertiser or marketer with products to sell has the option to donate its product to the producers, creating an "in kind" donation, or they strike a

financial agreement, which helps to offset the expenses of production. A California non-profit association, The Entertainment Resources & Marketing Association (ERMA), established in 1991, is an association of marketing, product placement, and brand integration professionals that work with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and to some extent, the Federal Trade Commission, to establish standards for the industry.

Section 317 of the Communications Act of 1934 governs product placements in all radio and television broadcasts. Section 317 requires broadcasters to disclose “any money, service, or other valuable consideration” that is paid to, or promised to, or charged by the broadcaster in exchange for product placements (Wegener, 2008, p. 5). If no money exchanges hands, broadcasters are not required to disclose said products at all. The exact wording, placement, etc. of the disclosure is left to the discretion of the licensee as to how the sponsorship identification is to appear (Wegener, 2008, p. 7). This proves to be problematic since these disclosures tend to be displayed as a very quick flash of information at the end of these programs during the closing credits. Over time, broadcasters have tended towards shrinking the closing credits screen in order to display other information such as other program or network information. This renders the identification of sponsors contained in a small screen occupying only a portion of the viewing area, flashing very quickly. It is almost impossible for a viewer to be able to see, let alone read the disclosure information.

As part of this gray area, sliding down a slippery slope of regulation, the courts have been ambiguous at best. With respect to branded entertainment, the United States courts have generally concluded that because expressive, artistic or entertainment content

is a medium for communicating ideas, such expression is non-commercial and therefore is entitled to First Amendment protection (Wegener, 2008, p. 9). Generally, case law illustrates that a hybrid, combining commercial and newsworthy elements, even in branded entertainment, will be deemed noncommercial if the program's primary purpose is to inform or entertain (Wegener, 2008, p. 10). These contradictions in the American regulatory system have allowed an ample arena for very loose governing rules. While the FTC has broad jurisdiction over advertising in general, in order for them to act, there must be an unfair or deceptive act or practice that affects commerce and that leads to substantial consumer injury (Wegener, 2008, p. 11). In absence of a clear, quantifiable measure of consumer injury, the FTC has declined to regulate the industry, citing the difficulty of a "one-size-fits-all" approach being inadequate for them to effectively rule the industry's practices (Wegener, 2008, p. 12).

The practice of product/brand placement began in "radio days" and was born out of company sponsorship. Manufacturers invested advertising dollars to reach their target audience and exacted direct control over the shows' storyline and creative design (Brennen, Dubas & Babin, 1999). One such example of sponsorship in radio programming, is that of the very popular radio program *Little Orphan Annie* (1930-1942), sponsored by the Ovaltine chocolate drink company (National Radio Hall of Fame, *Little Orphan Annie*, 2006). Another example of controlled sponsorship is the *Lux Radio Theatre* (1934-1955) that was sponsored by Lever Brothers, makers of Lux soap and detergent (National Radio Hall of Fame, *Lux Radio Theatre*, 2006). This sponsorship from a soap company led to the "soap opera" genre, a genre that originated from serialized, dramatic radio programs and their soap manufacturing sponsors.

Once television began its penetration into the American household, programs were moved to television, and television broadcasters continued to court the advertisers that supported the fledgling medium. Shows such as the *Texaco Star Theater* (1948-1953) with Milton Berle (Milton Berle, n.d.), *Chevrolet Tele-Theater* (1948-1950), *Philco Television Playhouse* (1948-1955), and *The Swift Show* (1948-1949) (Mashon, 2007, p. 142; Loomis, n.d.), and the *Jell-O Show* starring Jack Benny (Library of Congress, 2010a). *Goodyear TV Playhouse* and the *U.S. Steel Hour* are also examples of sponsorships from the 1950s (Deery, 2004, p. 16).

Advertisements were placed not only in the televised programs, but also between segments of the programs, known as the commercial break. Providing the majority of the production dollars, sponsors had opportunities to control the script, and thereby the product, to make sure that products were being presented in a positive light. Early research indicated that sponsor identification was more powerful on television than radio. A 1948 survey conducted by Young and Rubicam concluded that over eighty percent of all viewers could correctly match a particular television show with its sponsor (Mashon, 2007, p. 142). At the time, it was twice the rate of recognizability of radio sponsors.

The practice of sponsorship as a business model for television programming fell out of favor after this era. Although the practice can be traced back to radio and the early years of television, the modern, formal version of product/brand placement has its roots in the motion picture industry. The most famous example is the prominent placement and storyline integration of Reese's Pieces in the 1982 film *E.T. the Extraterrestrial* (Winsky, 1982). The film placement was originally scheduled for M&M's but in a monumental turn of events, the Mars Candy Company decided not to utilize the

placement. The Hershey's Candy Company gladly took the opportunity to launch its new candy product. When the film came to the screen, a sixty five percent sales increase of the product was reported, attributed directly to the film placement. This encouraged other marketers to follow their lead. This became a watershed moment for marketing, product/brand placement, and storyline integration history (Jacobson, 1995).

Product/brand placement and sponsorship in television has made a resurgence and has returned to modern television programming. The number of product/brand placements are now double that of the film industry ("Product Placement," 2005). In the United States, television placements grew by a staggering 46% in 2004. Unlike motion pictures and other campaigns that may take time to produce, television, as a medium, is immediate and has powerful high penetration in American homes and is a prime area for commercialized content (Friedman, 2002). Based on today's model, product/brand placement payments are based on exposure time, number of placements, and the product's level of integration into the storyline (Brennan et al., 1999). Placements today run the gamut from subtle or minor brand appearances to total brand integration such as what is seen in programs such as *The Apprentice* and *American Idol*.

An entire cottage industry has grown around product/brand placement. PQ Media (Global Product Placement, 2005) a leading product placement research firm, shows figures that the U.S. is the largest market for paid product placement. The firm also estimates the value of product/brand placement in the U.S. as a \$3.5 billion industry. There are product placement firms and advertising firms that have their own product placement departments. Most of the industry resides in the Los Angeles or New York area, staying close to two main hubs of media production. The primary function of these

agencies is to keep abreast of movie and television scripts looking for opportunities to place product (Russell & Belch, 2005). However, a web-based trend has also emerged in the industry that adds automation and efficiency. What used to take weeks for product placement agencies to accomplish, can now be completed in a matter of minutes with web-based tools; meet Product Placement 2.0. With online services such as MediaMatchMaker.com (Culver City, CA), and Placevine.com (New York City and Los Angeles), subscribers are systematically matched with brands seeking exposure or qualified studios, networks and producers - all in real-time. All subscribers, whether producers or marketers, fill out an extensive form that tracks all of their parameters, needs and goals.

What began as an intersection of art and commerce, product/brand placements today represent a shift to the intersection of advertising and entertainment creating a hybrid of “advertainment,” as much as the true artistic endeavors have been extracted from media products today (Balasurbramanian, 1994; Deery, 2004). The program becomes highly intertwined with its advertising content (Deery, 2004). Increasingly, the genre of reality television has utilized this technique of advertainment to place branded products. Advertainment is currently working in two directions, with entertainment becoming a form of advertising and advertising a form of entertainment (Deery, 2004, p. 18) . The advertising industry regularly borrows the technique from RTV by producing spot advertising that features segments with real people doing real things (Deery, 2004, p. 18).

For decades, brands have etched out well-defined roles in the landscape of media products through the production process. With the varied practitioners involved along the

continuum of the production process, many opportunities exist for a brand/product usage. Writers, directors, set designers and other creative professionals, in many cases, use these as communication tools to impart specific meanings. One type of application is to use brands/products to enrich and add depth to storylines. In some cases, brands are utilized in this way to add verisimilitude to the storyline, perhaps assisting the storytellers in placing the story in a particular time or place. The practice can also be used to craft a character's personality, imparting a plethora of information about that character. However, with today's highly commercialized media content, more times the practice is used as a direct result of a marketing contract between production and a company seeking to promote a specific brand or product (Balasubramanian, Karrh, & Patwardham, 2006, p. 115).

Marketers have successfully shaped the images presented through popular cultural vehicles, often by using those vehicles as sales tools (Solomon & Englis, 1994). Consumers appear more willing to accept brand images in media that were once deemed "commercial-free." Surveys of young Americans consistently show that product/brand placement is acceptable to them (Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Kräuter, 2000). Historical evidence of such acceptance stems from the increasing use of brand names in popular writing such as plays, songs, newspapers and magazines since World War II (Friedman, 2002). More important, such acceptance will likely continue into the future as emergent digital communication technologies present new opportunities to tailor or customize placements.

For the sponsor, the real strength of branding is the that the company gains identification with its products in the minds of the consumer. A brand typically includes a

name, logo and other visual elements such as images, fonts, color schemes or symbols. In essence, the brand is the symbolic embodiment of all the information connected with a company, product or service (Balasubramanian et al., 2006, p. 127).

According to the Nielsen Company, a global information media firm, results of a survey conducted with ten thousand individuals demonstrated the way viewers' feel about their engagement with television programming. The results revealed that "emotionally engaging" programming increases their ability to recognize brands, increases positive brand feeling, and strengthens their purchase interest for products in product placement and commercials ("Nielsen Says," 2007). In an extended discussion by Gardner (1987), Puto and Wells (1984), and Russell (1998), placements are more similar to transformational ads (soft/indirect messages that portray the significance or meaning of product consumption) than informational ads (hard-hitting/direct messages that provide factual, verifiable, and detailed product information).

Given the close cooperation between brand sponsors and the managers of editorial media content, viewers may actually expect placements in media content. This phenomenon is referred to as "product priming" (DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Balasubramanian et al., 2006). Some sponsors enhance this expectancy by placing spot ads in-between program segments. The goal is to prompt viewers to look for the placed brands in the program, thereby priming the audience for brand messages. In addition, if the viewer has been exposed to previous brand exposure or a positive brand experience, the viewer's memory can potentially provide an even stronger cognitive reaction to the brand (DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Balasubramanian et al., 2006, p. 126).

Another type of product/brand placement is “product integration.” Product integration occurs when a product or service becomes integral to the plot of the film or television show and is used consistently over numerous scenes in the program or the film. Advertisers have a great deal of control over the context surrounding the brand. Product integration occurs when a product or service becomes integral to the plot of the film or television show and is used consistently over numerous scenes in the program or the film. Advertisers have a great deal of control over the context surrounding the brand (Sheehan & Guo, 2005, p. 81).

Viewers have become accustomed to the format of the separation between program content and commercials placed between broadcast segments. In the past, viewers would simply leave the television or engage in other activities during the commercial breaks. With the advent and availability of DVRs (digital video recorders) or PVRs (personal video recorders), such as TiVo, many viewers choose to bypass advertisements when they view their recorded material. This shift of viewing places a greater importance on product integration. Naturally, the tendency for marketers is to go back to the practice of embedded advertising content. Viewers believe that they are avoiding irritating commercial clutter, however they are not as the exposure time for commercial messages in-program becomes even more pervasive (Deery, 2004).

NBC’s *Seinfeld* was an early player in modern television placement and integration. Brand names were regularly placed into the long-running program and received star billing with the products being integrated into the storyline and mentioned many times by the characters throughout the episode. Some of the most memorable

placements were those for Junior Mints, O Henry candy bar, Kenny Rogers Roasters, and Snapple (Darlin, 1995).

The strongest level of integration is “product assimilation.” This describes the case of when the product actually “becomes the plot” of the media product (Sheehan & Guo, 2005, p. 82). The purpose of this is to marry the advertising messages with the program content. Both audio and visual placements are apparent since the persuasive message about the brand is the primary content of the program. When complete product assimilation occurs, the brand becomes the “star” of the show (Sheehan & Guo, 2005, p. 79). In the case of *The Apprentice*, most episodes showcase a product or company that do indeed become the star.

The power of placements are undeniable. There are historic cases of strong product/brand placement that have helped to shape the landscape of today’s product integration. One case that is particularly compelling involved the Quaker Oats Company. Quaker Oats had developed and wanted to launch a new candy line to add to their cavalcade of products. Famed movie producer David Wolper, known for *The Thorn Birds* and *Roots* mini-series, became aware of this. Wolper met with the executives at Quaker Oats and convinced them to purchase the rights to the book *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (Dahl, 1964), and finance the film expressly for the purpose of promoting their new candy line (Pollard, 2005). Dahl himself was secured to write the screenplay for *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), loosely based on his book, with the name having been changed from the original title to reflect the new Quaker product tie-in (Willy Wonka DVD commentary). Ancillary revenue streams such as the merchandise tie-in is another aspect that can be exploited in the realm of RTV.

The product line is now owned by the Nestle corporation and is still sold in the United States. Nestle repeated this marketing strategy by marketing special chocolate bars for the release of another Dahl-inspired film, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005). Nestle reported the tie-in campaign was one of its most successful for Nestle in recent years as the manufacturing lines struggled to keep up with marketing demand. The launch came along with a Golden Ticket promotion as well also inspired by the storyline (“Willy Wonka Range Set,” 2006).

Branded entertainment continues to become a viable form of marketing, especially on television. Branding on television is in high demand because it offers easy immediate access to consumers. Currently, branding and sponsorship is an important feature of modern RTV. Nielsen Media Research recorded more than 100,000 placements on American television in 2006, with RTV leading the way (Magder, 2009, p. 152). RTV producers have convinced more marketers that product placement is often a strong supplement to the deteriorating effectiveness of tradition commercials. As a result, the value of placements has skyrocketed to millions of dollars per placement (“Product Placement,” 2005). With little chance of RTV programming entering into syndication, there is intense pressure to maximize revenues from each episode. (Deery, 2004, p. 10)

An important feature of the RTV programming is the modest investment of time and money to produce this type of programming (Deery, 2004, p. 3). This creates another win-win scenario for the producers and advertisers. The advertisers benefit because this type of programming is lucrative for the producers, thereby more of the reality based programs will be produced, which in turn gives advertisers more opportunities to utilize this vehicle. This reflexivity creates more importance and power for branding of

imbedded products and allows for effective sales building of products and the show itself (Deery, 2004).

RTV seems to be a perfect match for product placement, integration and assimilation, such as has been practiced heavily in RTV programming *American Idol* and *The Apprentice*. In a time of a splintering media marketplace and declining viewership of network television, companies such as Coca-Cola began using “experimental” advertising in 2003, which was later followed by Trump’s experimentation with *The Apprentice*. Coca-Cola began placing “teen lounges” in shopping malls that offered music, movies, videos and Internet connections. This concept was a tie-in with *American Idol*, which featured a green room for contestants that was actually the Coke Red Room (Hood, 2005).

In some cases, the RTV program is the platform to launch products that have been born out of the storyline of the program. Such is the case with *The Biggest Loser*, as it has spawned a host of nutritional products, videos, etc. from the trainers that are featured in the program. Once the products have been launched, the reflexivity continues as the self-referential plugs of those products are commonplace.

A landmark film worth noting in this discussion of RTV and product placement is *The Truman Show* (1998). The premise of this film involves the central character, Truman, living in a constructed world of reality. Everyone inside of his world is staged but he is unaware of this fact. He is also unaware that his entire life is playing to the rest of the world as an audience of millions tune in. This film explores the idea of verisimilitude of reality television funded entirely by product placement. Since the television program that is his life plays nonstop, without commercial interruption, it has

to make money through product placement. Advertisements are not-so-seamlessly woven into dialogue and scenes, as the actors break the fourth wall, and deliver their commercial messages, turning Truman's life into a continuous commercial, as well as a form of entertainment (Internet Movie Database, 2010b).

Ideological Analysis

Hegemony

Whether the world is experienced through the printed word, speech or camera, our media defines the world in which we live. The inescapable power of the media acts to define the spirit of our culture (Postman, 1985, p. 155). The media do so by shapeshifting into various roles of salesperson, tastemaker, educator, creator of popular culture, and historian; both reflecting and shaping American life (Sivulka, 1998, p. 428). Much of the information that is transmitted to society is delivered from the media gatekeepers along the information echelon, beginning at the top of that structure and working down to the masses. Their primary goal is to maintain the status quo, as it is in the media's best interest to do so. The media is a commercial creature, therefore the value of its commercialism must be maintained. To this end, media gatekeepers direct the viewer's attention to what they deem most important. This creates an all-powerful media structure that does have influence on society.

The media also help to maintain and support the status quo of a society. This theory begins with the ideas of Marx, as he believes that an oppressive economic system with an uneven distribution of wealth always exists, and this condition should lead to a mass uprising and overthrow of the capitalist system. In order for a select group to maintain control there must be a dominant ideology structure in place. This dominant

structure represents the idea of hegemony. While Marx's theoretical framework focuses on capitalism, the term hegemony was more fully conceptualized by sociologist Gramsci.

Gramsci concerns were less about the political process in revolt and more concerned about intellectual beliefs of the upper class being imposed upon the lower classes and their acceptance of these ideas, often against their own interests. Therefore hegemony, as explained by Gramsci, is about meaning and the struggles over whose ways of making sense of things dominate within an area of social life (Matheson, 2005, p. 6). It is about the invisible penetration of the ideas and ideals that seep into the social psyche.

Gramsci's beliefs also encompassed the idea that the media hold a key role in teaching the masses how to conduct their lives to support the power structures. The media gatekeepers, acting as the ruling entity, establish discourse in media texts that functions to preserve this hegemonic social paradigm, and indeed have the potential to shape what people think. In 1964, Marshall McLuhan conducted research that also supported this belief of media power:

All media work us over completely. They are so persuasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, and unaltered. (McLuhan, Fiore & Angel, 1967, p. 26)

Many scholars have conducted studies that look at media and the invisible power structures at hand. Again, the most important focus is the ideas, the transmission of ideas, and the ideas being used to lead a society forward.

Critical studies are necessary in order to properly interpret the media and its messages. Hardt (2001) stated that:

Critical communication studies offer historically grounded and politically informed examinations of culturally situated media practices that may expose power relations in the communication process and provide alternative readings of the relationship between media and society. (p. 2)

Meehan (1999) also believes strongly in the critical process that academicians have an ethical responsibility to shed light on hegemonic media control:

Regardless of the special focus of one's research, critical scholars share an ethical obligation to produce knowledge that accurately describes the media and reveals the hidden dynamics whereby media corporations attempt to commercialize and control expression service to advertisers and ultimately to capital. Our task is to illuminate the phenomena. For the media, that means explicating the experiences of and relationships among corporations, audiences, makers, and regulators. (p. 162)

Other academics concur with Meehan and the idea that academicians must participate in the deconstruction of the media. The process of deconstruction of the media was also reported in *Race, Myth, and the News* (Campbell, 1995) as racial bias in news broadcasts were examined. Campbell explains the underpinnings of ideological criticism and deconstruction:

A number of research approaches have been utilized in moving toward a cultural understanding of mass media and myth. Cultural anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology, psychoanalysis, literary criticism, and many cross-disciplinary approaches

have been used in attempting to interpret the deeper meanings that lay just beneath the surface of a culture's artifacts. Much of the research in this area indicates the need to, in James Carey's (1989) words, "interpret the interpretations" (p. 60).

The narrative that plays out on popular prime time TV reinforces hegemony. That such a narrative plays out on a popular prime time television program is particularly telling, in light of Corbin and McGee's (1998) argument:

Television shows are realistic because they portray relations as they exist in society. The portrayal as it exists in society encourages and intensifies those kinds of relationships; it makes them even more normative, more constrictive, and more constraining. It is an elaborate system of a perpetual-motion rhetoric – a rhetorical that constantly reinforces itself, makes itself come true. (p. 52)

Semiotics

Semiotics is an elemental building block of communication. Semiotics specifically represents the science of signs and is used to analyze and interpret messages with respect to culture. It is through semiotics that the messages are delivered to the audience. Semiotics generates a greater understanding of human societies, which are conceived of as being constructed systems of shared symbols and meanings. Humans communicate meaning and create shared experiences by using signs and symbols in many different ways. Applebaum (1987) stated, "In fact, we are capable of attributing meaning to any event, action, or object which can evoke thoughts, ideas, and emotions" (p. 477). It is through the use of symbols as a significant form of discourse permeating all human societies, that has led semiotics to become an important sphere of inquiry within the social sciences.

Barthes (1957, 1972), a social theorist, represents a notable area of the study of semiotics and societal myths. Barthes interrogate pieces of cultural material to illustrate the pressures of the ruling class to assert its values upon others. He challenges the idea of creating naturalized “common sense,” or assumptions within a society. This idea of common sense is born out of that particular social value system and is socially constructed. He described this as a process of *mythologization*. In writing about the process of mythologization, Barthes refers to the tendency of socially constructed notions, narratives, and assumptions to become "naturalized" in the process, that is, taken unquestioningly as given within a particular culture (Wennerlind, 2001). Culture and cultural myths, Barthes argues, presents artificial, manufactured and, above all, ideological objects and values that are socially constructed. Therefore these artifacts are only significations, not reality.

According to Barthes (1977) the diffuse meaning of images must be fixed, usually by language, in order for its meaning-making potential to be unlocked (p. 39). In this way, language is used to make sense of images. However, Foucault and Magritte (1983) argue that people can be falsely positioned within an established system of seeing that links reality with visual representation, or referents. *Magritt's Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (1926), “This is not a pipe,” illustrates this idea of referents. Magritte's painting of a pipe, combined with the painted words "This is not a pipe," calls into question visual representations. What is painted on canvas is not actually a pipe, but a depiction of a pipe. This statement serves to point up the artifice of the conventional equivalency between "an actual pipe" and “the image of a pipe” (Foucault & Magritte, 1983). Again, not reality, just a social representation of reality.

Baudrillard (1983) and Eco's (1990) postmodern idea of the "hyper-real" also comes into play in this construction of reality. This can be used in an attempt to describe the mass-mediated construction of the world and the glossy images that are presented. Of course the attractiveness and plurality of meanings is far better with the constructed representations. According to the ideas of both Baudrillard and Eco, America presents the perfected epitome of fakery with an expertise in recreating representations of reality. Furthermore, the example that is held to illustrate this idea is Disney Land. Disney's "Main Street" display at the park, evokes nostalgia and harkens back to a simpler place and time in small town mid-America, around the turn of the twentieth century. This ideal representation of this construct is a perfectly scrubbed, fantasized, and packaged version of something that never really existed. Disney's job is to make glossy, hyper-real representations of eras, complete with the appropriate glossy representations of places and things.

Another example is the Hawaiian luau. For decades people have been shown the images of Hawaiian luaus complete with beautiful girls in grass skirts entertaining with hula dancing, such as is depicted in the Elvis Presley film, *Blue Hawaii*. In reality, luaus were nothing more than Pacific Islander family and friend gatherings to celebrate an event, while enjoying a group meal. Since the Hawaiian luau has been so romanticized by images in the media that we view, it has now become a convention of the tourist trade in Hawaii. The idealized version of this celebration is so engrained into visitors' minds and expected by them, that Hawaiian businesses have had to manufacture an "authentic Luau" experience. These fabrications are quite expensive and require transportation, large areas of land, and facilities to be able to produce such an event. Tourists either have to

board buses to be brought to a luau facility or more often than not, the luaus are hosted by beachside hotels because they already have the picturesque grounds, the facilities, and the staff to execute such a lavish celebration. Tourists must pay for this hyper-real experience that has been burned into their psyche as the average cost is eighty dollars per person at an average luau.

Myths are another important element in the study of culture and its language. Fiske and Hartley (1978) have analyzed myths in semiotic terms, interpreting cultural myths as meaning-making systems that help explain societal attitudes, behaviors and ideologies. Multiple codes emerge from the messages and contain culturally shared associations, and expectations, and are available to diverse groupings of consumers for their interpretive purposes (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997).

One important myth, particularly in the context of this research, is that of the mythical and illusive American Dream: “If you work hard then you achieve all of the benefits of The American Dream” (Campbell, 1995, p. 16). Indeed Fiske and Hartley agree that myths are polysemic, therefore the American Dream myth may have multiple meanings to different people. The term was coined by James Adams in his book *Epic for America* (1931), and refers to being able to attain what is possible with one’s unique innate abilities, regardless of birth circumstances or position in society (Library of Congress, 2010b). However, it’s meaning has now been fabricated into a myth that has more to do with acquisition of money, luxury items, and security, more than one’s potential.

Mainstream entertainment texts solidify the production of our culture; they produce our social reality. Postman (1985, p. 155) writes, “We have no criteria for

judging what is meaningful, useful, or relevant information” that is, texts are responsible for creating the content of the culture. Through this communication construct, society analyzes everything around them. They digest, interpret, and internalize it. It is through this process that the production of meaning is manufactured. Therefore, these are not merely texts, but participants in an ongoing ideological process, that are responsible for creating the content of our culture (Postman, 1985).

Textual Analysis

In 1975, communication historian and theorist James Carey outlined a vision for qualitative research influenced by the tradition of American cultural studies:

To seize upon the interpretations people place on existence and to systematize them so they are more readily available to us. This is a process of making large claims from small matters: studying particular rituals, poems, plays, conversations, songs, dances, theories, and myths and gingerly reaching out to the full relations within a culture or a total way of life. (p. 190)

As Carey points out, in order to show a relationship between media texts and society, it is necessary to engage in a process of systematic dissection of these texts. Qualitative research methods are often used in this type of social science research. It is an appropriate method when a numbers-based statistical data set is not appropriate for the research at hand.

Qualitative methods can be used to uncover patterns, as the conceptual framework arises from the data itself instead of a hypothesis. This type of research is inductive and interactive, allowing for direct experience with the phenomenon that is being studied. The in-depth investigation of complex issues, generates detailed information that enables the

researcher to describe the phenomena of interest in great detail. This in turn leads to a better understand of the context and meaning of the data .

As discussed by Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative methods are more suitable than quantitative methods for addressing certain questions about culture, interpretation, and power. For these purposes, the flexible and accommodating aspects of qualitative inquiry, its relational style of fieldwork, its inductive mode of analysis, and its resistance to closure, are strong attributes (p. 14).

Using Sillars (1991) paradigm of communication criticism is also helpful in this type of analysis. In his view, it is important to realize that the researcher is making ideological judgments no matter which approach that he uses. As in documentary filmmaking, there is no such thing as complete objectivity. The filmmaker has a political viewpoint and will shoot his documentary based on his personal point-of-view. Sillars also realizes that in order to properly evaluate a communication artifact, the researcher must consider the whole of the cultural and historical framework to which the artifact belongs. The communication artifact is married to its place and time. Finally, Sillars advises that Rosenfeld's (1968) anatomy of critical discourse be considered. This consists of four basic elements which include source, message, environment, and the critic, directing the focus of the criticism. Sillars believes all of this should be considered in any final analysis of communication.

In the realm of qualitative methods is textual analysis. Textual analysis is a common methodology used in media studies, as well as a central methodology of cultural studies (McKee, 2003). Textual analysis, as a research tool, seeks to prod

beneath the surface of the denotative meanings and examine more implicit and connotative social meanings.

In this way, the use of the textual analysis approach can view culture as a narrative in which particular “texts” or “cultural artifacts” consciously or unconsciously link themselves to larger stories at play in the society.

The use of textual analysis provides a useful means of examining texts for the social constructs presented within them. As Leff and Sachs (1990) noted, rhetorical texts create a reality for the consumer through the assignment of meaning to experiences shared by the group as a whole. Examining these texts for their inherent social constructs increases the researcher’s understanding of the impact of these programs and the messages they transmit to an audience (Holmes, 2007, pg. 12).

Since popular texts are described as those that appeal to a large, heterogeneous audience they must be polysemic, with a variety of potential meanings. According to Fiske (1989), textual analysis is used to discover and illuminate those potential meanings within a text. Recognizing this requires a shift in the dominant modes of textual analysis because textual analysis and textual theory have traditionally concentrated on recovering from the depth of the text the final, “true,” ideological, latent meaning. Textual analysis has concentrated on the forces of closure within the text, the forces of homogenization. Instead of looking at “one truth” the method seeks the differences within the text that create polysemic readings. (Fiske, 1989, p. 31) Fiske also sees this type of critical analysis as a political activity and encourages “readings” of popular texts that are grounded in the resistance to the opposition of the dominate message (Burns & Thompson, 1989, p. 3.). Meehan (1999) suggests, “Reading ‘against the grain’ thereby

becomes tantamount to fighting capitalism. This reduces capitalism from a political economic system to a preferred, albeit oppressive, mode of interpreting texts” (p. 153).

The interrogation of media texts proceeds from the intellectual discourse and interpretive model of cultural studies, particularly the work of Fiske (1986, 1987, 1989), Gilroy (1992), and Hall (1992), who are encouraged by its “special intellectual promise” (Nelson & Grossberg, 1992, p. 1). Cultural studies specifically considers the ideological and discursive struggles within media culture and the ways that people understand and cope (Fiske, 1989). Regardless of whether considering social or economic issues, cultural studies unmasks the deeply embedded power structures that attempt to sustain dominant ideologies. In this regard, the cultural studies model can facilitate a meaningful critique of RTV (Bell-Jordan, 2008, p. 354).

Hall (1980), a seminal author in semiotics, discusses the manufacturing and the processing of communication messages and analyzes how people make sense of media texts. In a “which comes first” circular construct, Hall argues that while the media appear to reflect reality, they in fact actually construct it. Through his well-respected, semiotic reading theory, he tackles the issue of the way in which people make sense of media texts. Hall’s seminal article *Encoding/Decoding*, discusses the manufacturing and the processing of such communication messages. According to Hall, the messages are broken down into a denotative or literal meaning and a connotative or associative meaning. This is accomplished through textual analysis. Hall asserts that to deconstruct texts is to establish the difference between being “in language” (ideology) or “against language.” “In language” represents the dominant reading that supports the prevailing ideology, or

“against language” that represents an eye to reading against the grain of the text (Hall, 1992, p. 161-162).

In this key paper, Hall also recognizes that the dominant ideology, those that are producing the media texts, make sure that a “preferred reading” is interpreted by the consuming masses. A preferred meaning supports the ruling ideology, with its economics, power and control in the maintenance of the status quo. However, Hall points out that the preferred reading is not always readily adopted. Readings of media texts can also take a “negotiated reading” turn. People may recognize that there are differing viewpoints to take into consideration, instead of necessarily following the dominant ideology. This takes into account their social position and accords them the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application (Hall, 1992, p. 137). Ultimately people have the ability to think and choose and not necessarily fall in line with the status quo, and following like mindless sheep. As Fiske (1997) notes:

Despite the cultural pessimism of the Frankfurt School, despite the power of ideology to reproduce itself in its subjects, despite the hegemonic force of the dominant classes, the people still manage to make their own meanings and to construct their own culture within, and often against, that which the industry provides for them (p. 286).

The third type of reading in Hall’s paradigm is the decidedly “oppositional reading,” which involves direct conflict with the material being presented. This is the most critical type of reading to this study. This type of reading is produced by those whose social position puts them into direct conflict with the preferred reading. An

oppositional reading “detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference (Hall, 1992, p. 138). It results in a rejection of the material on its face, and allows for meanings to be reconfigured.

Social Discourse

To develop a deeper understanding, discourse analysis is used as a more finely honed tool in realm of textual analysis. It is applicable to not only verbal language, but other modes such as the visual can be explored as a way of making sense of the world (Matheson, 2005, p. 118). Discourse analysis builds on the tradition of textual analysis when it draws upon its sociological, anthropological and philosophical heritage by looking at how people use language to make sense of things and get things done in daily interaction (Matheson, 2005, p. 7). It has been discussed by other scholars previously, but to reiterate, Foucault’s idea of discourse is that it is not a stand-alone element, but is part of a network of relations of power and identity.

Discourse analysis maps out how language, including written text, spoken language, and visual forms, discursively constitutes the social world. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) suggest that the analyst has to work with what has actually been said or written, exploring patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations. They also suggest that discourse analysis aims to find out “how the world is ascribed meaning discursively and what social consequences this has” (Jorgensen et al., 2002, p. 145).

When discussing social discourse of television, there is no doubt about the power of penetration that television has achieved in America (Friedman, 2002). Television,

created and maintained by advertising, is keen on creating idealized models of the way in which society should live. This creates both manifest and subsequent latent effects.

Postman (1993) expressed ideas about television's power:

On the one hand, there is the world of the printed word with its emphasis on logic, sequence, history, exposition, objectivity, detachment, and discipline. On the other there is the world of television with its emphasis on imagery, narrative, presentness, simultaneity, intimacy, immediate gratification, and quick emotional response. (p. 16)

Pieper (2000) points out that the immediacy and pervasive nature make it a perfect medium with which to disseminate such discourse: "Given that television is without question the most pervasive and powerful of modern 'discursive apparatus,' the possibility that televised discourse reflects and disseminates the map of power in society is very high" (p. 75).

One facet of this power is program connectedness. This is a more comprehensive and far-reaching construct than program involvement. Program connectedness is relevant when a viewer's relationship with a program extends beyond the exposure experience into his or her personal and social life (Russell 1998; Russell, Norman, & Heckler 2004; Russell & Puto, 1999; Russell & Stern, 2006). In such instances, the program exerts a far greater influence than one might expect under high program involvement. This influence may find expression through adoration or imitation of program characters, social groups that facilitate interactions with other program fans, or rituals constructed around the viewing experience (Russell, 1998). (Balasubramanian, et al, 2006, pg. 130) . Most importantly, individuals with a high degree of connectedness to a program are likely to

view it frequently, pay greater attention to it, and imitate behaviors drawn from its episodes.

Much can be disseminated through the discourse of “The Confessional.” People confess their thoughts directly to the camera, in essence speaking to the audience. In order to use this to its full potential, the production team wants the contestants to feel at ease, either using a couple of production members, or a camera mounted behind glass in an isolated room. The contestants discuss their latest thoughts, feelings, game strategies, and their relationships with the other contestants. While this is a commonly used convention of RTV, sprinkled throughout the program to propel the action and drama forward, social messages are cleverly disguised and disseminated.

To be sure, television has always lacked in its presentation of diversity. The lack of diversity acts to alienate diverse audiences. Particularly troubling is that fact that the lack of diversity all too often leads to use of stereotyping. Harvey (2006) explains that all of this begins with the hegemonic control of Western culture that dictates *others* (those outside of the norm) are painted with a broad stroke of generalizations. This generally is in regards to gender, race and sexual preference. Many television studies have been conducted that have provided empirical data as proof of this generalization and stereotyping due to lack of television diversity. In televised representations of race, Campbell’s (1995) *Race, Myth, and the News*, provides evidence and discussion of the racial bias in news broadcasts. Jhally and Lewis (1992), in *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show And The Myth Of The American Dream*, discuss perceptions of issues of both race and social class.

In feminist television studies, studies of misrepresentations of women abound. Women tend to be young, attractive, and occupy mostly “pink collar” occupations or in the context of home and family (Tedesco, 1974; Signorielli, 1982). In this way, as Maher (2004) notes, television texts act to “indoctrinate women into traditional gender roles” (Brancato, p. 49). All of this affects the way in which society views the proper “roles” for women (Shanahan, Signorielli, Morgan, 2008). Laura Mulvey's seminal work, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), also provided a new paradigm of looking at women through the “male gaze,” which sexualizes women and in the context of television is quite prevalent.

While the number of gay characters on television has increased in number, the characterization of them has not changed (Kachgal, p. 361). Harvey (2006) points out that one way that hegemonic control is enforced is through marginalization. Marginalization of gay characters usually depicts a lack of morality. This construct of gay identity plays into the stereotype that gay men are obsessed with sex (Morrish & O'Mara, 2004, p. 351). The idea of sexual perversion is one of the most effective stereotypes in creating the idea of “otherness” and act to separate those from mainstream culture (Harvey, 2006, p. 214-215).

Prosis et al. (2004) believe that scholars interested in reality television programming should consider the content that programs present to its viewers. The theoretical basis that was used for their study of racial profiling in crime-based reality TV programs was derived from Kenneth Burke's (1967) research. According to the Burkean model, the concept of the “representative anecdote” involves a generalized drama that provides a series of lessons and expectations for the audience (Prosis et al., 2004, p. 74).

Brummet (1984) expands Burke's definition to televised forms of communication. The televised content that results from this representative anecdote, contains discourse for "equipment for living" that offers a prescription to allow people to cope with their society and their world through language, which provides a sort of "medicine" to understand their world and their social problems (Prosise et al., 2004, p. 74; Burke, 1967). Prosise and Johnson found that reality television drama can provide a series of lessons and expectations for audiences, albeit skewed and not representative of the real world (p. 74).

In the Prosise et al. (2004) article on racial profiling in crime RTV programming, they consider and discusses what the programs present to viewers, or the televised discourse. Kenneth Burke (1967) has advanced the theory that "literature" offers society "equipment for living," in order for them to understand and cope with their world and social issues. Brummett (1984, p. 162) expands Burke's definition of "literature" to include televised forms of communication as "discourse," therefore "televised discourse is equipment for living." Following Burke and Brummett, Prosise and Johnson used rhetorical analysis of RTV texts to show Burke's use of a representative anecdote which provides a series of lessons and expectations for the audience. In their view, RTV programming offers audiences a skewed and poor representation of society, as social narratives abound in RTV. Televisual discourse about Genderism, ageism, sexual orientation and stereotypes can be found. The concern is the ideas and statements that shape the viewing in RTV programming. (Matheson, 2005, p. 107)

While RTV has various show formats and sub-genres, their professed ability is to provide viewers with "real people in real situations." Critics of the genre have claimed that the term is a misnomer and what these shows portray is far from actual reality.

Producers and editors take thousands of hours of footage and shape the program and its “characters” for the maximum benefit of the show. This can create a complete misrepresentation of contestants, their ideas, views, or contestants relationships. Upon finishing production of a show, some contestants complain about that very fact. The contestants have no recourse, as legally they have relinquished full control to the production company, which has the right to portray a person to their specification to suit the production. Selective editing can also produce social commentary on any subject that the production team wants to focus on.

With RTV’s verite-style, the camera lens has the power to produce a particular sense of the real (Matheson, 2005, p. 106). However, both executives and cast members admit that RTV is one of a “manipulated production environment” (Bagley, 2001, p. 74). In the “cage of an unreal environment” the RTV program uses footage that is selected and edited, in an attempt to present a virtual world that is a polished version of the real one (Matheson, 2005, p. 103-105). Participants are put in exotic locations or abnormal situations, sometimes coached to act in certain ways by off-screen handlers, and events on screen are manipulated through editing and other post-production techniques. Not only are the participants aware that the environment has been set up for express purpose of filming, but, in some cases, they are also told what to do or say (Hall 2003, Nabi, Biely, Morgan, Stitt, 2003, p. 193-194). This is a compromise reality in its truest sense of the word (Stern, 2009, p. 53).

As the production is manipulated, there are some “real” consequences surrounding the production of these RTV programs. Real injuries take place; family members get ill; family members pass away; romance and sexual situations; arguments;

physical fights. One example is Brett Michaels, a singer from the 1980s rock group Poison, who had a cerebral hemorrhage before the end of the production of the *Celebrity Apprentice*. The producers had to decide how to proceed with the rest of the production, if in fact, Michaels, who was one of the two remaining candidates, could not attend the live finale of the season. Situations such as these affect the production in various ways.

Hall (2003) asserts that viewers are aware of the production process of creating media texts, which more often than not shifts their perceptions of realism (Stern, 2009, p. 68). The blending of realism and dramatic narrative, in effect, collapses boundaries between the real and unreal (Hall, 2006). As much as the production teams attempt to make everything seem real, the audience is reminded of some of the blatant artificiality that comes along with this genre. Occasionally a microphone boom may graze the top of the shot, or an image of a production person may be visible in a window or mirror. Bulky wireless body mics that are stashed on the bodies of the contestant can often be seen under their clothing.

On programs such as *Big Brother*, viewers hear the rustling of clothes as it hits the body mics, and because of the strict policy of keeping the mic on at all times, viewers see the contestants trying to situate their body mics. One extreme situation involved Shima, a female contestant on *Big Brother* (2009). She got angry, ripped off her body mic, and threw the equipment in the whirlpool. Production team members actually came onto the set to escort her out of the *Big Brother* house and off of the show for damaging the microphone during her temper tantrum.

Programs such as *Big Brother* try to create a “fully managed artificiality.” (Couldry, 2004, p. 83). Even after contestants are voted off of some of the shows, they

are not allowed to go home, are sequestered in a house, suite or hotel. Some of the programs reveal the sequestering to the audience, but others do not. In the case of *Big Brother*, the contestants are almost completely isolated from the outside world during the game. The house even goes into “lockdown” mode complete with visual barriers, when the production team is building the sets in the backyard of the house for the various competitions. Occasionally, *Big Brother* allows an outside person into the house to either reward a contestant, or to move the drama forward.

At times, the production staff interferes with the storyline. Contestants are staged, set or asked to do certain things that advance the storyline in a certain direction. There is no doubt that at times, the production staff asks contestants to recreate action that has already taken place. On an airing of *The Bachelorette* (June 7, 2010), the contestant Justin had a broken left leg. Several shots are shown of him on crutches with his left leg in a cast with a special boot. In one quick shot of him, the cast and special boot is on his right leg. The production team obviously needed another shot of him, post cast- removal, and made a continuity error when they went back to recreate more footage of Justin on his crutches.

Controversies over the culture of consumption are significant. The consumer culture grows with the advancement of the sophistication of the U.S. capitalist system. The institutional structure of the consumer society slants culture toward the realm of commodities, services and lifestyle (Cortese, 1999, p. 124). The institution of consumer culture supports the belief that wealth, power and beauty is desirable and accessible to all (Slater, 1997). It is an ever-growing relentless machine that continues to churn twenty

four hours a day, three hundred sixty five days a year. All of this perpetuates consumerism.

According to Slater (1997), the term “consumer culture” generally refers to the way in which consumption is organized within modern capitalist societies. This ultimately raises questions about how we should live and the way in which society should be arranged and its resources mobilized. In the ad-saturated world of 21st century America, the nation buys more and save less than any era before. People have incurred more debt than ever before acquiring goods and services. With a provocative “power of things,” there is a presence of a corruptive influence of product obsession and consumerism. Although there are many factors that contribute to the consumer culture, the concern for this project is television and its role in advancing consumerism. Promotionalism and consumer culture is now a dominant cultural condition, with RTV programming at the forefront (Murray & Ouellette, 2009).

The media have had a hand in creating and maintaining a consumer culture. Since promoters provide the monetary means for producing and distributing media programming, the power lies heavy in their hands. The power of advertisers results in tremendous marketing control. This ultimately results in control of the type of programming, the content of programming, and distributing the programming. These companies inundate the media with commercial messages, ad nauseam. They constantly remind viewers and listeners, that they need to consume in mass quantity.

In the relationship between sponsors and consumers, there is a definite need for cultural symbolic competency on both sides (McCracken, 1986). When interpreting marketing communication, consumers and marketers draw on a flexible and widely

shared sociocultural code and construct meaning about the ad, brand, or sponsor (Hall, 1980). Brands fill the bill, as they are socially visible, accessible, and easily understood in our consumer society (Balasubramanian, et al., 2006, p. 132). However, viewers may not necessarily perceive the commercial intent behind brand usage in the television programming (Balasubramanian, et al., 2006, p. 130).

At some point along the continuum, goods come to be designed less for direct usefulness and more for the meanings and myths they are able to mobilize and represent (Hearn, 2009, p. 166). Individuals may use a particular brand in a given situation to enact a desired social identity (as opposed to a global self). Generally, the more important a social identity is to one's sense of self, the more one will perceive as desirable the brand that displays or reinforces that identity. The marketplace, including media programs, provides opportunities to learn and adopt such identities (Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan 1993). Most people maintain at least a minimal level of motivation to process information about symbols that may help them express their desired identities (Balasubramanian, et al., 2006, p. 130).

Deery (2004) discusses two types of RTV environments that have implications for consumerism. The first is the *Hedonistic* environment. This type of environment is replete with luxury, however with certain restrictions. The Hedonistic environment is a marketers dream as the emphasis is placed on products. The producers regularly block out names of brands and products that are not under contract with the program. The way this is done is very deliberate and there is no disguising the fact that the production crew has done this. The blocking out is usually accomplished by a very low tech method by the set design team taking black or white gaffer's (electricians) tape, available on every

production set, and taping over the labels. In effect, excluding or punishing any brand or product that has no alliance with the production of the RTV program. If this is not accomplished in production, the editing team will blur out the brand name in post production, such as is seen on apparel that is being worn by contestants. Generally speaking, it is safe to assume that if a product or brand is shown, they have some type of alliance with the production of the program. On occasion, this rule is broken if authenticity requires that particular brand or product be shown, but this is rare, especially for an RTV program (Deery, 2004, p. 11).

The second environment that Deery discusses seems like an unlikely candidate for such a discussion of products and desire of consumption. This second RTV environment is the Spartan environment. It involves considerable deprivation, discipline and restriction such as *Survivor* and *Big Brother* (Deery, 2004, pg. 10). The power of this environment is that of reward. On some occasions a reward is presented that displays a particular brand or product name. On *Survivor*, contestants were rewarded with Doritos and Mountain Dew. Keep in mind that all these contestants had to eat was what they could forage in the wilderness. With deprivation as an element, the starved contestants are most certainly assured of being overly excited about the products. A Pontiac Aztec made an appearance for winning contestants to sleep in, instead of sleeping in the bare bones of the camp. When the products are the prizes or awards themselves, they take on an elevated status. When a product is the prize the object automatically takes on added value. The product/brand in-program placements are usually reinforced by additional spot commercials.

Beginning with the fact that *Big Brother* deprives their contestants of food and comfort, consumer products are put into a position to be transformative and magical. The basket of “goodies” that await each Head of Household (HOH -- winner of the weekly challenge) in their comfortable room, separated from the rest of the deprived contestants, is replete with products with name brands. The goodies have magically appeared in the room. The HOH looks at and talks about every product in their basket, delights in it, and tells stories about why that product is special to them. When the HOH receives their basket, they also receive letters from loved ones, and pictures of the HOH with their loved ones are also displayed in the room. The HOH for the week is rewarded with a big comfortable room, surrounded by well wishes and pictures of their families, and their favorite name-brand products. The products take on a higher significance, come to life, and magically help to transport the HOH to better times with their family members.

Many do not consider the fact that given pristine environments such as the locations that *Survivor* selects, is being inundated, trampled and ravaged by the production team and crew. Consumerism and the television product brings these crews to these remote locations. This influx of people can impact the flora and fauna of an area. Commercial trucks supplying provisions and the sheer number of people in a production crew is enough to harm the environment, disrupt animal habitat and their behaviors. In the case of *Survivor*, there have been some allegations made about harm to the environment, but it has been recognized that generally that *Survivor* takes care not to cause damage. If damage does occur, production staff rectifies it and exceeds the measure to leave the area better than when they arrived. When *Survivor* showcases these locations, many people become interested in traveling to these areas. Some countries that

Survivor has used for series locations, has caused the respective tourism departments to double in size in order to control the tourism growth. In most cases, these pristine environments are not ready for an onslaught of tourists. While *Survivor* is not known to be a perpetrator of environmental damage, nonetheless, the possibility still exists to cause harm to the environment whether from that production crew or any others.

Another construct of a consumer society is the idea of luxury living. Luxury, by definition, is a relative term that indicates something past the ordinary and into the realm of the unattainable. Or more aptly, attainable only for a select few. It is also synonymous with control, power, exclusivity, rarity and something desirable. In the United States, luxury living is defined as fine living with luxury goods of all types. Programs such as *The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* give viewers the idea of what true luxury is and how those with means actually live. The luxury market has been built on the mythical desire of special material goods. This makes luxury a social construction, only given meaning through a social paradigm.

One in seven American families earns more than \$100,000 a year (Twitchell, 2002). This is the general income benchmark at which companies that sell luxury products begin targeting. Economists and companies that produce luxury goods track luxury consumer confidence for any given period. Unity Marketing is one of the companies that track the luxury consumption market using the luxury consumer index (Twitchell, 2002). With the United States median household income at fifty-one thousand dollars (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), a high-style, luxury lifestyle is elusive.

Many RTV programs define luxury time and time again, which preserves the hegemony of the social hierarchy of the “have and have-nots.” Luxury is also used in the

form of rewards and pitting contestants or teams against one another creating envy. These feelings of envy also add to the drama and excitement of the program, also potentially resulting in envy from the viewers as well.

Of course, many of these programs award the winner with a large sum of money, creating someone that can take advantage of luxury as a result of being a contestant on a RTV program. If a contestant wins one million dollars, visions of an expensive home, car, and lifestyle for the average Joe contestant is conjured. However, while one million dollars is substantial, in the U. S., generally half of the winnings are used to pay for tax on the capital gain. If the remainder is not carefully controlled, the winnings can disappear in a short amount of time and thereby not support a future luxurious lifestyle.

The voyeur appeal is a well documented element of the RTV genre. The idea is that a type of voyeurism, an authorized “peek” into the lives of others, is created with RTV programming. Part of the voyeuristic appeal is the possibility of witnessing acts that may be sexually charged. If viewers are expecting to perhaps see a sexual encounter, they will be sorely disappointed as nudity, obscenities, and adult content would be censored by the network that airs the program, especially those on prime-time network television. None-the-less, the salacious expectation is enough to gain viewer interest. (Deery, 2004)

One exception to this editing of obscene RTV content, is producers that have bypassed conventional programming by broadcasting via a webcast on the Internet or on pay channels. This technique is utilized by *Big Brother*. Audience viewers are lured to the unedited video streams hoping to see content such as questionable language, nudity or sexual activity, that would normally be edited out of the program.

Another exception to this is was a RTV series, *Family Business* (Maxwell Productions, 2003-2006). This program appeared on the Showtime Network during their late night programming (Internet Movie Database). The sexually explicit cable programming, centered around the porn industry. The production took place in Los Angeles in which Adam Glasser, a porn actor/producer, was depicted running his family business that produced and distributed porn material. His young son, older cousin, and mother were regularly featured on the program, the latter two working for the family porn business. Sexual acts were depicted with full sound effects, but the program did obscure the sex acts.

Another aspect of the voyeuristic appeal is that not only are people viewing, but they are viewing en mass. The idea that thousands of people are watching is appealing to viewers and represents a type of “mass voyeurism,” an invisible audience viewing the intimate lives of strangers (Deery, 2004, p. 7). These programs takes private actions in private spaces and makes them public for a mass audience.

As the fantasy of the voyeur appeal takes hold, reality is debased, and the audience member is being primed for imbedded advertising messages (Deery, 2004). The “gaze” of the audience presents passivity that are a marketer’s dream as their messages cut through the clutter of other advertisements and general noise that prevents embodiment of their messages.

RTV definitely has the promise of creating celebrities from everyday people. One can go from obscurity to celebrity very quickly. This creation of instant celebrity and its fifteen minutes of fame and the possibility of career advancement is very powerful especially in the celebrity obsessed culture of America. This exposure can lead to other

employment opportunities or offer lucrative entrepreneurial opportunities. Post RTV careers for previous contestants can include offers of magazines spreads, media anchors and reporters, motivational speaking, or offers for more opportunities to become a contestant on other RTV programs. As Deery points out:

Many of those being viewed on Reality TV have agreed to an unusual degree of intimate exposure in the hopes of some material gain: For some it is immediate cash, for others another currency such as fame, which can translate into cash through, for example, advertising endorsements or other media careers (Deery, 2004, pg. 8).

Some of the contestants are people that want to break into the potentially lucrative acting business. There are some professed “experts” that have written books and conduct courses to assist people in landing a contestant spot on a RTV program. This definitely can be a one avenue to break into the acting industry. Other advantages to a previous contestants newly found fame can include the opportunity to gain financial wealth. This may be from the winnings such as a million dollar prize for the winner of *The Survivor*, or lucrative business opportunities that may be presented as a result of exposure on a RTV program/programs. Elisabeth Hasselbeck, a previous contestant on *Survivor: The Australian Outback*, through her celebrity she was offered a position to become one of the regular group hosts on Barbara Walters program, *The View*. Mike "The Miz" Mizanin, who was a former contestant on *The Real World*, and various spin-offs, later became a professional wrestler for the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) corporation.

All of these potential opportunities can come at a cost. One great disadvantage of this potential fame is the complete invasion of privacy of one's life. The contestant has no control over this as they have signed all of their rights away in tightly constructed contracts that allow the production team full access to them for filming purposes, and have also relinquished all of their rights to the way in which their image and character can be used by the production team. Depending on how they are portrayed the potential exists for embarrassment, humiliation, or harm to one's reputation. A damaging portrayal of character can also lead to the contestant to be fired from their jobs or potentially may raise issues with potential legal problems.

The Apprentice Series

Series Synopsis

The program began its first season in January of 2004 and concluded its sixth season in 2007. Trump was having difficulty with NBC in renewing a contract for the original premise since ratings had steadily declined for the series, including dismal ratings for a 2005 spin-off, *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart*. Even though NBC had effectively killed the series, in 2008 the series returned with another version in which celebrities played for monies that ultimately would be donated to their favorite charities. A total of three *Celebrity Apprentice* programs have been produced and have aired on NBC.

The format of the regular installation of the show is consistent throughout the six seasons of the regular series. *The Apprentice* producers select fifteen to eighteen contestants to vie for a prized position within the Trump organization, billing it as "the ultimate job interview." The position begins with a one year contract with a starting

annual salary reported to be \$250,000. The contestants typically have backgrounds in various enterprises, including real estate, restaurant management, political consulting, sales and marketing. The contestants are placed in a communal house, allowing for the contestants to interact in front of the cameras, building relationships and creating conflict..

As the weeks progress, the contestants are grouped into two teams and are put through a series of “tasks.” The tasks become the premise of the edited episodes that are presented each week for broadcast, for approximately fifteen weeks, which constitutes one season. Each team is lead by a “project manager” that guides the team through the weekly task. The project manager assumes this position in a variety of ways. Usually, the team members volunteer for the position. However, depending on the particular rules of the particular season, contestants are allowed to lead the following week when their team wins. Sometimes the team themselves select who will be the project manager, and other times Trump steps in to assign the position. Once the task is over, all contestants conduct a final scene in the “boardroom” (a set created for the pressure-cooker scenes of the grilling of the contestants and subsequent elimination) for the results of the task, which team won the task, and the reward that the winning team is to receive.

Elimination for the losing team proceeds in two stages. The losing team is brought back to the boardroom for questions, interrogation and critiques from Trump and pre-selected corporate assistants or other boardroom guests. The project manager is asked to select up to three team members who are believed to be most responsible for the loss, with the rest of the team being dismissed to return to the suite. In the second stage of elimination, at least one contestant is eliminated, and endures Trump’s signature phrase

of “You’re fired,” which he attempted to trademark and failed to secure. Eventually, through a series of eliminations, all but two contestants are left for one final battle. The last corporate task is assigned to both remaining contestants and the winner of the challenge is awarded the coveted Trump Organization position at a live televised event in front of a studio audience.

Season One

Sixteen candidates were selected for this initial season. The teams were divided by men vs. women. Trump served as the “ring-master” of the program with the Trump Organization at the hub of the competition. It was clear that this program provided a showcase for Trump merchandise. Trump fired one candidate from the contest per episode. The season took place in New York and the teams lived in a sumptuously appointed Manhattan loft apartment located in the Trump building. During its first season in Spring 2004, *The Apprentice* was the number one new show of the television season among total viewers and among adults aged eighteen to forty-nine. An average of 20.7 million people watched each week and 40.1 million watched all or some of the finale (Yahoo!TV, 2006a). Many of the women in this season sought to use their sexuality to win competitions and were eventually chastised by Trump for doing so. Bill Rancic was the first contestant to win the coveted *The Apprentice* title.

Season Two

The second season featured eighteen candidates. The premise of the second season was the men vs. the women. The season also took place in New York at the Trump building. Kelly Perdew was named *The Apprentice*.

Season Three

The third installment of the competition pits book smarts vs. street smarts. At the beginning of the game, the eighteen contestants were divided into teams based on whether they had a formal education or not. One team consisted of MBAs, lawyers and other well-educated types, while the other was made up of entrepreneurs who had succeeded with only high-school diplomas. When NBC first ordered *The Apprentice* in 2003, it played up the education-vs.-experience element as if it would be central to the game. In the first two seasons, however, the teams were divided by gender (Yahoo!TV, 2006b). Kendra Todd was the first woman to be named *The Apprentice*.

Season Four

The eighteen candidates on the fourth installment included the variety of two former beauty queens, a Rhodes scholar, a former NFL player and, according to some news reports, an ex-stripper turned entrepreneur. By the fourth season, interest had begun to wane and ratings began to slip. The group also included a number of people who had already banked their first million. Reportedly, the cast was hand-picked by Trump (Yahoo!TV, 2006b). Trump returned to the men vs. women format. Randall Pinkett, the first and only African American, won the title of *The Apprentice*.

Season Five

The candidates on the fifth installment included a Mensa member, Harvard graduate and three international candidates. Project managers were selected by Trump and they were allowed to form each team by selection among the candidates. For the first time, Trump's son and daughter filled in for some of his regular corporate members such as George Ross and Carolyn Kepcher (Yahoo!TV, 2006b). This was the first season that

the entire fifth season of *The Apprentice* was available for purchase on iTunes. The British contestant, Sean Yazbeck, won the title of *The Apprentice*.

Season Six

This is the only installment that was moved from New York to Los Angeles. At the time, Trump was developing his new golf club, Trump National Golf Club in Los Angeles. In this season, Trump also assigned two of his children, Ivanka Trump and Donald Trump Jr. to be his boardroom judge assistants. This season revolved around the “have” and the “have not’s” as only one of the two teams were allowed to live in the house next to his mansion and temporary office. The other team was forced to endure the elements and inconvenience of living in a “tent city” that was set up in the backyard of the house. The Project Manager of the winning team was also allowed to be a part of the boardroom proceedings. This was also the only season that the remaining four candidates were allowed to compete in the last task, and all four were final contestants at the live finale. Stephanie Schaeffer won the title of *The Apprentice*.

The Apprentice Studies

Popularized culture media products such as *The Apprentice* have been used for research material. Programs such as this were previously dismissed by many as media product that merely reflects low brow popular culture at a time in broadcasting when RTV has substantial domination in the production of primetime programming. There have been some scholars that have recognized the rich content of programs such as *The Apprentice* and recognize that this material can represent a significant social text.

The research that has been conducted has for the most part analyzed *The Apprentice* text as televisual discourse for successful operation in the business world.

This situates the program as the preeminent authority of best business practice, to its audience. While all of the studies used some amount of social semiotics as the basis for their research, the Duffy et al. (2006), Lair (2007) and McGuigan (2008) studies are the most germane to this study. In their research, they utilized a wider range of social semiotics and examination of commercialism within the program.

Kinnick and Parton (2005) were interested in the business communication aspect of the program and cite, “*The Apprentice* stands alone as the first television show to use business savvy and business scenarios as the basis for competition...” (p. 430). The researchers were also keenly aware that *The Apprentice* program was being used as a media text to create university business classes using the program as a model for business practices.

Because the show is being legitimated by college educators and career advice media as a means to learn career success strategies, and because the show draws a vast audience, the messages that it conveys about communication in the workplace are particularly influential and worthy of study (Kinnick & Parton, 2005, p. 434).

Utilizing the first season of *The Apprentice*, the Kinnick and Parton (2005) study was to determine to what extent that communication skills would be presented as being a critical component of business success. Their findings indicated that communication was presented as an important skill in the workplace in the way of team challenges and communication activities. Other indications included the use of Trump’s asides called “trumpisms,” that were used by the program as a platform for Trump to offer advice about communicating in business scenarios. These “trumpisms” generally focused on

persuasion in interpersonal communications which was revealed as the most critical element in winning the weekly task. The trumpisms included such topics as the delicate art of negotiation, standing up and defending one's actions, and never to appear desperate when selling (p. 437).

Additionally, they examined the level of communications proficiency of the contestants and how it related to their success in the game. From their research, they also confirmed that communication proficiency and the success of the contestant in the game did have a relation. The more communication proficiency the contestant had, the longer they were able to stave off elimination from the game.

Kinnick and Parton (2005) also used a gender paradigm for an additional facet of their research. They discovered that women were found to be judged more heavily for their interpersonal skills and transversely men were judged for their leadership skills. They suggested that for the women, an "expectancy theory" may shed some light on this finding:

The theory suggests that if we expect women to have strong interpersonal skills, we may view the demonstration of their skills as 'normal' rather than praiseworthy. Women, it seems, must negotiate a fine and ever-shifting line between being assertive but not confrontational, attractive but not sexual, invested but not emotional when things go wrong, democratic leaders but also independent decision makers... (p. 447).

Their study suggests that since women are only judged for their interpersonal skills and their leadership skills ignored, their advancement in an organization could be curtailed. This gender bias was discussed by Herrera (2004), a civil rights organization executive,

in an article that she wrote in *USA Today* that discussed the fact *The Apprentice* was a prime example of the reality of a glass ceiling in the workplace: “To spark true change, we need to acknowledge that although it can be hard to see, the glass ceiling exists. For proof, just tune in to reality TV” (Herrera, p.13A).

The Duffy, et al. (2006) study approaches *The Apprentice* from a critical communications perspective. Their case study evaluated all news coverage of *The Apprentice* in newspapers, magazines, trade publications, and television that were available via Lexis/Nexis:

The Apprentice offered a case study of programming that involved product promotion, product placement, celebrity publicity, product/event tie-ins, pseudo-events, traditional public relations media placement, and a host of guerilla/alternative marketing tactics (Duffy, et al., 2006, p. 2).

Duffy et al. thoroughly analyzed the content of the episodes of the first three seasons of the series. Their results indicated that *The Apprentice* teaches viewers lessons not only about business but about personal success as well. In their research, they found the program teaches viewers about the ideology of the capitalist aspects of culture and the use of business practices and successes as a model for the viewers. The researchers argue that *The Apprentice* illuminates how capitalism adapts in the face of viewer attrition and DVR systems that allow viewers to skip commercial messages (Duffy et al., 2006). They found that *The Apprentice* utilizes many marketing strategies using synergy to maximize its promotional potential (Duffy et al., 2006). They found that the content was laden with advertising and promotion which in turn advances capitalism. In their estimation, *The Apprentice* celebrates business, selling, and promotion.

Boyle (2008) examined many reality programs from Britain, in particular the BBC, in an effort to discover how the face of business was being represented in RTV in that country. With the BBC perception that a more entrepreneurial culture existed among its younger audience and an increasingly fragmented television marketplace, the BBC began to explore synergizing some of the new hybrid formats proving popular with audiences. The advent of a more business-friendly Director-General at the BBC, encouraged the BBC to take business-related content seriously across the range of its programming (Boyle, 2008).

The BBC gave credibility to the British version of *The Apprentice*, framing it as an important business education format that happened to be entertaining. This is a departure from the way in which NBC frames the American version of *The Apprentice*. NBC emphasizes the drama factor of the program for American audiences (Boyle, 2008). As part of Boyle's research, he included the first season of the British version of *The Apprentice*. In his research, Boyle points to the commercial aspect of *The Apprentice* as its main strength: "Programmes such as *The Apprentice* or *Dragons' Den* represent the merging of entertainment formats with reality material drawn from the world of business and commerce" (Boyle, 2008, p. 422) Additionally, he asserts that these programs entertain and produce "water cooler" television that targets a younger, upwardly mobile audience and "continues to shape the world of commerce and influence our everyday lives and cultural tastes and habits" (Boyle, 2008, pg. 423).

Boyle found that representation of a brash affluent, entrepreneurial Britain, full of risk-takers, can often be found across the British television schedules from educational schools' broadcasts to prime-time programming. The problem, according to Boyle, is the

lack of presenting reality in Britain. By 2007, twelve million people were living at or below the poverty line with high unemployment rates plaguing Britain. Boyle notes that lifestyle, makeover and leisure programs proliferate BBC programming. Just as in the U.S., the representations of TV life are greatly exaggerated and fall far short of the actual state of living in Britain (Boyle, 2008).

While Boyle's focus was British programming, perhaps some of his findings could be generalized to American programming and more importantly the perception of the audience as well. His use of the British version of *The Apprentice* is an important aspect that adds to the small body of work that *The Apprentice* has launched in academic research that includes the disciplines of business, media studies and social discourse.

In a study by McGuigan (2008), the researcher chose to compare a 2005 U.S. season of *The Apprentice* to a 2007 British edition of the series. He analyzed the systematic operations within the two programs. With McGuigan's use of social semiotics, he proposed that the audience forms prior ideological assumptions about the content of *The Apprentice* program. It was found that the audience assumes that the tenets of the program will teach them how to be successful in business. As the audience anticipates this information, they are highly sensitive to not only the messages but all of the nuances as well. He found that as a popular entertainment program, it evokes key ideological assumptions about how to be successful in business. The research revealed this in the way that the competition is organized between the teams and the individuals, the weekly tasks selected for the teams, and the resulting rewards given to the winning team each week. The research was part of a larger project for McGuigan, that was published in his 2009 book.

Lair's study (2007) looked at *The Apprentice* as popular management discourse. This is the first reported study to critically examine *The Apprentice* in terms of its potential social influence as the major focus of the study. Lair conducted this research using a holistic approach analyzing five regular seasons and the Martha Stewart version, along with a popular Apprentice blog and the posted comments.

Lair analyzed the social dialogue that transpired as a result of the episodes as he examined a popular *Apprentice* blog and analyzed comments that viewers had made about the program. Lair found that the strength in *The Apprentice* was the oppositional discourse that transpired between participants of the blog, instead of the program setting itself as the preeminent expert voice of best business practices. The blog gave people an arena with which to launch dialogue about business issues, whether they agreed or disagreed with *The Apprentice* episodes that had been broadcast. Lair also points out the overarching commercial and marketing aspect of the program:

Although *The Apprentice* never explicitly talks about itself on-air as a marketing vehicle, its marketing power nevertheless remains an inescapable subtext of the program. The program leads the way in the relatively new field of "branded entertainment," a hypercharged variety of product placement that seeks to carry advertising messages to audiences... (pg. 244).

Lair also found that *The Apprentice* used social propaganda to attempt to influence the ideology of the audience. That such a narrative plays out on a popular prime time television program is particularly telling, in light of McGee's (1998) argument:

Television shows are realistic because they portray relations as they exist in society. The portrayal as it exists in society encourages and intensifies those kinds

of relations; it makes them even more normative, more constrictive, and more constraining. It is an elaborate system of a perpetual-motion rhetoric-a rhetorical that constantly reinforces itself, makes itself come true (Calvin et al., p. 52).

Using Burke's "equipment for living" as a basis, Lair contends that *The Apprentice* can "act as equipment for living" (Lair, pg. 218). The implication leads to the potential influence of *The Apprentice* to tell its audience how to live. Furthermore Lair asserts, *The Apprentice* bases itself in the narrative myth of the American Dream. By doing so, this legitimizes its ideological message. Jhally and Lewis' (1992) make the observation that, "Although the American Dream wasn't invented for television, television appears to nourish and sustain it" (p. 73). Silverstein, Fiske, Butman (2005) also agree that, "The American Dream is not only alive and well as an aspiration, it has become the emblem of our identity, the physical expression of our heart and soul" (p. 76).

Holmes also used both Donald Trump and Martha Stewart in his 2007 study. Through textual analysis, he looked at the gendered stereotypes represented in the mass media news coverage of the 2005 Martha Stewart and Donald Trump productions of *The Apprentice*. Based on the Made (2000) study and a previous project by Holmes (2006), he extended the research with this project. The pervasive nature of reality television and the messages it presents become increasingly salient the longer it remains a part of mainstream entertainment. From constructions of gendered expectations in social settings to the business environment, reality television wields significant influence on social values (Holmes, 2007). Holmes research sought to increase the body of knowledge on media's effects in constructing and reifying social values for its audiences (Holmes, 2007).

The Holmes' study used the previous five themes from previous research: types of leadership, types of candidates, projects, language and setting. The textual analysis revealed five gendered stereotypes: the homemaker and the business mogul, legitimate and illegitimate business figure, the fallen woman-child and the male as hero-protector, masculine authority and the disappointing businesswoman, and the attacking businessman and the feeling businesswoman. These findings are consistent with previous research concerning gendered expectations for the workplace (Holmes, 2007). Holmes summary states:

Mass media possesses significant opportunities for communicating ideologies, messages, or products that organizations or governments want to promote to large segments of the population, serving as a transmitter of socially-acceptable beliefs and stereotypes and influencers of public policy, while simultaneously influencing the perspective of viewers, listeners, and readers nationally. (p. 2)

The inundation of images from television results in a greater reliance on the images to define reality: "Regardless of whether these programs use actors or individuals selected from the general public, they serve a hidden purpose of recreating or redefining cultural artifacts" (Holmes, 2007, p. 3; Zaharopoulos, 1997; Zhang & Harwood, 2002).

Tressler (2006) took a decidedly different tactic for his research. He was interested in the way people felt about RTV business moguls Donald Trump and Martha Stewart and the potential influence that their shows could have on big business attitudes. Specifically Tressler looked at the influence that these programs may have, looked at viewers' attitudes, whether the viewers' would develop "parasocial feelings" for Trump and others, and the level of parasocial feelings (Tressler, 2006, p. 27-28). Tressler held

the belief that viewing *The Apprentice* holds the potential to have a direct influence on a participant's business attitudes, but also has the potential to work indirectly through the mediators of parasocial feelings toward Trump and Stewart (Tressler, 2006). Using medium theory was an important theoretical framework for Tressler's study. This theory is an important theoretical perspective for mass media studies because it outlines how media, rather than functioning simply as channels for conveying information between social environments, are themselves social contexts that foster interaction and social identities (Meyrowitz, 1997; Tressler, 2006).

University students were selected and a survey was administered to them after having watched episodes of *The Apprentice* and *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart*. Tressler found that respondents developed a feeling of trust with Trump and Stewart. Furthermore, those feelings also extended to the business world that the two represent. The findings found that the audience was allowed personal access to the business world via Trump and Stewart. With big time corporate personalities such as Trump and Stewart appearing in these reality-based programs and offering their advice and wisdom to contestants about how to make it in the business world, the door had been opened for viewers to form parasocial connections with them (Tressler, 2006, p. 66).

The embarkation of a study on television discourse analysis involves examining many social issues that cut across various disciplines. The idea is to examine the content of the texts and to tease out the main messages that are contained in the text. The endgame is to find these messages, and to interpret the way in which viewers may view this content and the potential that it may have to not only affect their actions, but also affect how they view the world.

CHAPTER III

THE APPRENTICE AND REALITY TELEVISION COMMERCE

The practice of product/brand placement began in “radio days” and was born out of company sponsorship. Manufacturers invested advertising dollars to reach their target audience and exacted direct control over the shows’ storyline and creative design (Brennen, Dubas, Babin, 1999). One such example of sponsorship in radio programming, is that of the very popular radio program *Little Orphan Annie* (1930-1942), sponsored by the Ovaltine chocolate drink company (National Radio Hall of Fame, *Little Orphan Annie*, 2006). Another example of controlled sponsorship is the *Lux Radio Theatre* (1934-1955) that was sponsored by Lever Brothers, makers of Lux soap and detergent (National Radio Hall of Fame, *Lux Radio Theatre*, 2006). This sponsorship from a soap company led to the “soap opera” genre, a genre that originated from serialized, dramatic radio programs and their soap manufacturing sponsors.

Once television began its penetration into the American household, programs were moved to television, and television broadcasters continued to court the advertisers that supported the fledgling medium. Shows such as the *Texaco Star Theater* (1948-1953) with Milton Berle (Milton Berle, n.d.), *Chevrolet Tele-Theater* (1948-1950), *Philco Television Playhouse* (1948-1955), and *The Swift Show* (1948-1949) (Mashon, 2007, p. 142; The Museum of Broadcast Communications), and the *Jell-O Show* starring Jack Benny (Library of Congress). *Goodyear TV Playhouse* and the *U.S. Steel Hour* are also examples of sponsorships from the 1950s (Deery, 2004, p. 16).

Advertisements were placed not only in the televised programs, but also between segments of the programs, known as the commercial break. Providing the majority of the

production dollars, sponsors had opportunities to control the script, and thereby the product, to make sure that products were being presented in a positive light. Early research indicated that sponsor identification was more powerful on television than radio. In 1948, a survey conducted by the advertising agency, Young and Rubicam, concluded that over eighty percent of all viewers could correctly match a particular television show with its sponsor (Mashon, 2007, p. 142). This was twice the rate of recognizability of radio sponsors at that time.

The practice of sponsorship as a business model for television programming fell out of favor after this era. Although the practice can be traced back to radio and the early years of television, the modern, formal version of product/brand placement has its roots in the motion picture industry. The most famous example is the prominent placement and storyline integration of Reese's Pieces in the 1982 film *E.T. the Extraterrestrial* (Winsky, 1982). The film placement was originally scheduled for M&M's but in a monumental turn of events, the Mars Candy Company decided not to utilize the placement. The Hershey's Candy Company gladly took the opportunity to launch its new candy product. When the film came to the screen, a sixty five percent sales increase of the product was reported, attributed directly to the film placement. This encouraged other marketers to follow their lead. This became a watershed moment for marketing, product/brand placement, and storyline integration history (Jacobson, 1995).

Product/brand placement and sponsorship in television has made a resurgence and has returned to modern television programming. The number of product/brand placements are now double that of the film industry (PQ Media, 2005). In the United States, television placements grew by a staggering forty six percent in 2004. Unlike

motion pictures and other campaigns that may take time to produce, television, as a medium, is immediate and has powerful high penetration in American homes and is a prime area for commercialized content (Friedman, 2002). Based on today's model, product/brand placement payments are based on exposure time, number of placements, and the product's level of storyline integration (Brennan et al., 1999). Placements today run the gamut from subtle or minor brand appearances to total brand integration such as what is seen in programs such as *The Apprentice* and *American Idol*.

By tying brands to entertainment products, a hybrid emerges that has been referred to as "advertainment." Advertainment has been considered "the single biggest messaging shift...[which will] truly converge the worlds of Hollywood and Madison Avenue" (Jaffe, 2005; Russell, 2007, p. 6). Advertainment has gained its acceptance and is being treated less as a tactical tool and increasingly as being integrated as one component within the communications mix (Russell, 2007, p. 10). It can also serve as the backbone of a public relations campaign, used to generate word of mouth or generate press coverage (Russell, 2007, p. 11). Since cross promotions are also being added to enhance product placements and integrations, advertainment can also be partially assessed by its impact on sales. Once the opportunities with interactive television and internet-based campaigns are utilized, these direct marketing tools can also be used to evaluate the impact of advertainment, especially when a direct response component is built into the advertainment campaign (Russell, 2007, p. 11).

A study by TNS Media found that, in the fourth quarter of 2005, RTV programming had an average of 11:05 minutes per hour of brand appearances as compared to just 3:07 minutes per hour for scripted entertainment programming, such as

sitcoms and dramas (TNS Media Intelligence, 2006; Russell, 2007, p. 5). This shows the heavy use of this technique in RTV programming. With RTV programming using this type of promotion, *The Apprentice* has lead the way and has developed the tightest sponsorship integration. To gain viewer interest with the program and their sponsors, the formula for RTV programming acts to highly develop the dramatic effect and goes to great lengths to tie the viewers to the participants in the storyline. This makes RTV a perfect vehicle for promotion, since results reveal that “emotionally engaging” programming increases the ability to recognize brands, and increases positive brand feeling, and strengthens purchase interest for products in product placement and commercials (“Nielsen Says,” 2007). As always, the final results that all marketers are looking for, is at the cash register.

Another issue of emotional engagement involves the Brummet/Burke theory. The combination of theories advanced by Burke and later expanded by Brummett, states that “televisual discourse offers equipment for living” (Prosser, et al., 2004) . Messages embedded in the text of *The Apprentice* may have the potential to provide a paradigm of tenets for viewers to accept and possibly adopt for an ideal way to live. This becomes extremely problematic when the text is that of RTV programming. The “real” presented in RTV is not “reality,” therefore, viewers are gathering information, based on erroneous situations, that lead them to potential processes, understand and cope with something that does not exist, the manufactured world presented in RTV programming. *The Apprentice* text, ripe with commentary, may qualify *The Apprentice* to be the biggest RTV offender in creating this manufactured reality.

At first blush, *The Apprentice* is presented as an RTV game with selected contestants vying to win a prized position within the Trump organization; however, it is much more than that. The program is a strong marketing tool and is a commercial juggernaut in its own right presenting a perfect vehicle for embedding advertising content. Many corporations have taken advantage of the series to use it as part of their marketing plan for specific campaigns, to advertise products, launch new products, and improve their brand or corporate image.

As part of the multi-disciplinary approach to this study, this chapter will focus on *The Apprentice* and all of its contributions that build RTV commerce through its schemes and manifest and latent televisual discourse. This chapter explores yet another aspect of a theoretical paradigm of *The Apprentice* as a possible source of televisual discourse for living for viewers. The televisual discourse will be interrogated through the major themes that have emerged from the research.

Using textual analysis and Hall's oppositional reading techniques, all ninety episodes of the six-season series were examined in an attempt to discover ways in which the producers of *The Apprentice* used the series to build prominence in both the world of RTV and the corporate world. Based on the information obtained from the six-season series, the following themes have emerged: *The Apprentice*'s marketing and promotional schemes, the sponsors' use of the program, Trump's use of the program as his own promotional vehicle, the presentation of *The Apprentice*'s American Dream through lux living, and business discourse existing in the text of the successful RTV program.

The Apprentice offers a case study of programming that involves product promotion, product placement, celebrity publicity, product/event tie-ins, pseudo-events,

traditional public relations media placement, and a host of guerilla/alternative marketing tactics (Duffy & Brennen, 2006, p. 2). *The Apprentice* utilizes many marketing strategies using synergy to maximize its promotional potential (Duffy et al., 2006, pp. 6-7). While RTV is a perfect match for product placement, integration and assimilation, the way in which the techniques were manipulated provides the program's most unique feature.

The Apprentice Promotion Scheme

Trump is no stranger to the power of promotion. Trump, being the consummate carnival barker, has used the media many times for promotional purposes. For *The Apprentice* production, Trump partnered with Mark Burnett who had already established his legendary status in RTV programming with *Survivor*. As a result he is credited as the father of the modern version of RTV. Hailing from Great Britain, he has been masterful at providing not only the U.S., but the world, with the RTV product. Mark Burnett stated in an interview with Esquire magazine:

Survivor is as much a marketing vehicle as it is a television show. My shows create an interest, and people will look at them, but the endgame here is selling products in stores – a car, deodorant, running shoes. It's the future of television (Hearn, 2009, p. 168).

Part of Burnett's success includes recognizing these commercial possibilities of RTV programming. With *Survivor*, Burnett made deals with the networks that he would pre-sell advertising. He would then sell spot advertising time or sponsorship space directly to the companies that wanted to advertise. This, in effect, circumvented advertising agencies, eliminating the middleman between program creator and sponsor. As a result

Burnett was credited with creating a low-risk model for the networks, and a cost efficient way for companies to advertise.

Before production began, Trump and Burnett were having difficulty securing companies to participate in the yet unproven program. This is evident in the first season of *The Apprentice*, as there are fewer placed sponsors, branding and product integration. As such, the contestants participated in such non-branded tasks such as selling lemonade, selling apartments, selling art work, a scavenger hunt, and selling merchandise at a booth at a flea market.

As part of the executive producing team, Trump called in favors from business acquaintances so as to have companies participating in those first episodes of Season One. This resulted in the program sporadically partnered with businesses such as the Deutsch Advertising Agency, Planet Hollywood and Chrysler. Since the pre-sale advertising/sponsorship idea was slow to be adopted by companies and their executives, Trump and Burnett made a bold move to entice companies to be involved by not paying for the placement of products. With an initial “no-pay” move to get sponsors on board, the commercial interest in their program gained momentum.

Once the episodes aired, the sponsors saw huge increases in awareness and sales for their products. Trump and Burnett not only featured the products, but completely integrated them into the storyline. The game’s contestants’ primary task of each episode, was enveloped around the product/sponsor, with as much promotional material that could be placed in the view of the camera. The contestants not only talked about the products, but also handled and demonstrated the products. Spot advertising was inserted, along with clever cutaway commercials encouraging viewers to visit the sponsor’s website. The

result was a heavy dose of marketing communications for the viewing audience with targeted messages about the product/sponsor. The innovative “no-pay” move had worked to spur sponsors interest in the marketing possibilities of the program, and the resulting tremendous response of the exposure. This, along with innovative storyline integration/assimilation and cross promotions, established *The Apprentice* as being credited with creating the new RTV business model for sponsorship (O’Brien, 2004).

The success of the technique had begun to take hold by the second season (Jordan, 2006, pp. 84-86), and the no-pay scheme was dropped. Still in the building phase of the series, when Season Two began, some sponsorship spots still remained open. Lacking larger sponsors for the tasks, Trump and Burnett began working with smaller businesses (Barnes, 2006). The producers reduced the usual sponsorship fee to allow small business to participate to fill the sponsor gap. This ancillary sponsorship scheme proved to be very successful for small businesses that were savvy enough to have come on board with the program. Take the case of the smaller, lesser-known gelato company, Ciao Bella, which was featured on Season Two (Russell, 2007, p. 6). The sponsor fee was greatly reduced from one million to fourteen thousand, which allowed the company to participate in the program (Barnes, 2006). The benefits were unprecedented for Ciao Bella.

As part of the storyline integration for Ciao Bella, *The Apprentice* contestants were charged with creating two new flavors for the high-end ice cream purveyor. At the end of the episode, viewers were encouraged to sign onto Yahoo! Local to find store locations in thirteen markets that would have the new flavors available. The term, “*Apprentice* Ice Cream” was the third most-searched term on Yahoo! that day (Dehnart,

2005). The thirteen locations selling the flavors were sought out by viewers and most of the locations had sold out of the special *Apprentice* flavors by noon the next day (Dehnart, 2005) .

Debra Holt, sales and marketing manager for Ciao Bella, reported as a result of the broadcast, Ciao Bella's website traffic jumped from the usual twelve thousand visitors per day to one million visitors. Not only was that an increase of eight thousand percent, but its online sales had increased by two hundred percent. The visibility was also instrumental in making many people aware of Ciao Bella, a twenty-year-old company, either because they were outside of the demographic of the product or had not been exposed to the product because of their geographic location (O'Brien, 2004).

The Apprentice was proving itself to be a marketing powerhouse, possessing all of the necessary elements for that formula. As Jhally (1989) explains, a television program must first be able to attract a large number of viewers. The program had no problem accomplishing since it was slotted on NBC's prime-time schedule. Second, the program must target the right type of viewers, excluding demographic groups that lack spending power. The program was able to attract and deliver the advertising sweet-spot demographic of a ethnically non-diverse, socially homogeneous, eighteen to thirty-nine year old age group. The third element, as pointed out by Jhally, is that viewers must be in the right frame of mind to accept advertising messages, therefore programs need to be designed to enhance the effectiveness of the ads in them (Jhally, 1989, p. 76). In the case of *The Apprentice*, the viewers had been primed with marketing communications having been intertwined with a storyline integration technique. Through the course of an episode, viewers had observed both audio and visual placements of the product, its packaging, and

its use by the contestants. Based on Jhally's (1989) assessment, it is no surprise that *The Apprentice* producers became very successful in their economic endeavor.

Generally the spotlight and focus of RTV programs is on the main dramatic action, which creates the conflict between the characters in the program. However, *The Apprentice* was able to use both the formulaic conflict platform and sponsored branding techniques quite successfully. Part of the success ties in with another important aspect of any RTV program storyline. The viewer must be invested and be able to relate to the characters and the storyline. In the case of *The Apprentice*, viewers become emotionally invested in the characters, but they are also empathetic, reminded of their own personal struggles within the workplace, whether landing a job or trying to advance in their respective working environment. In the case of marketing and sponsorship, it is logical to assume that if people are entrenched in the storyline and emotionally involved, they are also paying attention to the advertising that is embedded in the program. This is the reason that product/brand placement is so powerful. This involvement also plays a part in the strength of *The Apprentice's* cross marketing techniques.

As the program becomes highly intertwined with its advertising content, this creates a "3-D mapping" of the sponsors' products, which acts to not only elevate the prominence of the product, but also to help drive interest in the product. "The biggest benefit of all is clearly exposure," says Jay Bienstock, an executive producer for *The Apprentice*. Bienstock adds, "*The Apprentice* ramps up the power of television and product placement because the products and companies are not just a backdrop, they are integrated in the tasks" (O'Brien, 2004). When complete integrated product assimilation occurs, such as is seen in *The Apprentice*, the product actually "becomes the plot" of the

media product and thereby renders the brand as the “star” of the show (Sheehan, et. al., 2005, p. 79-82). Put succinctly by Mr. Trump, “It’s the only show where the product is the star of the show” (*Big Idea with Donny Deutsch*, 2006).

Within the first five weeks of Season Two, *The Apprentice*, had featured numerous and varied large sponsors, including Mattel, QVC, Zagat and Procter & Gamble, with most of these companies seeing a huge spike in sales after exposure on the program. Sponsors liked the unique platform that *The Apprentice* provided with products being both talked about and part of the action (Cuneo, Neff, & Macarthur, 2004) . The product integration packages provided the sponsor’s inclusion in the storyline for both teams, with widespread logo placement, and appearances by company executives (Goetzl & Friedman, 2006). Seamless integration always remained key in the successful *Apprentice* integration campaign. By the end of its second season, *The Apprentice* had successfully ramped up the power of television with its successful integration techniques.

Word spread throughout the industry that *The Apprentice* was a proven marketing vehicle, well worth the sponsorship dollars. One media executive cited, “It is one of the few properties that does it right in terms of integration, making sure that the brand interests are well-represented” (Goetzl et al., 2006). This resulted in some large corporations, such as Procter & Gamble, buying fewer commercials in a television season in order to commit part of their advertising budget to alternative marketing methods, such as branded entertainment offered by this reality branding technique (Graser & Stanley, 2005).

The shrewd business team of Trump and Burnett had also inked a unique deal with NBC and the sponsors. The sponsors were required to purchase advertising time on

NBC, thereby ensuring that the network would be paid their share of advertising revenue (Graser et al., 2005). However, the lucrative revenues obtained from the product integration packages with the sponsors, would be retained by Trump and Burnett (Goetzl et al., 2006). The integration deals were highly profitable for NBC, Trump Productions, and Burnett Productions. Trump and Burnett earned more than thirteen and one-half million dollars from corporations involved in Season Two (Cuneo et al., 2004) . Additionally, Trump and Burnett formed some long-term relationships with many of the sponsors. As a result, some of the sponsors were involved in multiple episodes and multiple seasons. Sony, Wal-Mart, Yahoo!, Best Buy, Outback Steakhouse, Microsoft, QVC, Burger King, Unilever, General Motors, Chrysler and the Dial Corporation were among those involved in multiple highly successful sponsorships.

By Season Three, the program had been finely honed for its marketing potential. Hordes of companies began waiting in line for their opportunity to pay millions of dollars to participate in an episode of *The Apprentice*. According to executives involved at the time of the corporate negotiations, talks on integration fees for Season Three began at two million dollars, up from one million dollars for a Season Two sponsorship. Sony's PlayStation, Visa International and Verizon Wireless were some of the large corporate sponsors of Season Three. At the time, *The Apprentice* integration deals were the highest for any TV program (Goetzl & Friedman, 2006). The integration price climbed even higher with the price for Season Five as the integration spots ranged from two to three million dollars. That constituted the maximum price of the sponsorship integration prices, as the price for Season Six settled back in to one million dollars for comparable integration spots (Goetzl & Friedman, 2006).

Trump admits to being fascinated with branding and has remarked “It is all about branding.” He and Burnett, through *The Apprentice*, had become masters of what has been called “reality branding” (Adamson, 2006). Previously, the use of branding in RTV had only been used sporadically in the industry. To this day, *The Apprentice* has been the only RTV program to rely heavily on this technique of reality branding.

With Trump and Burnett’s foresight and business savvy, they were able to overcome the problems with getting the fledgling program off the ground. They took a gamble with the “no pay” scheme, but the gamble paid off handsomely in the end. *The Apprentice* franchise was able to produce one of the tightest integration packages of placed products within a television program. This resulted in a product/plotline assimilation Utopia that has never been seen, even in the early days of sponsored television programs.

Leveraging *The Apprentice* Brand

Partners in Action

There were many ways that sponsors leveraged *The Apprentice* program and its branding. Some sponsors used it as one part of an overall marketing plan, to launch new products, to enhance brand recognition, or to improve sales. All of these were very effective ways to utilize the program and its powerful arms of promotion. However, there were a few problems that had to be dealt with along the way.

Dial was one of the large corporations that decided to utilize the power of promotion of *The Apprentice* to help launch its first new products in years. In fact, Dial sponsored two episodes in the same season. Each episode was focused on one of the two new products. The first episode was for the new Soft Scrub product. The task for the

contestants that wrapped around the product was for the teams to each produce a Webisode for the new Soft Scrub Deep Clean Bathroom Cleaner. In a later episode for the Renuzit product, the contestants were to produce a sixty second commercial for Renuzit Super Odor Neutralizer, designed to be broadcast as a promotional vehicle at AMC cinemas.

Dial was also set to execute a “multi-tiered, three hundred sixty degree marketing and promotional campaign” for both brands, capitalizing on *The Apprentice* integrations. This included campaign support by in-store displays, TV and print ads, sweepstakes, Web promotions, sampling and couponing, as well as a full-scale publicity campaign (Schiller, 2006). Brian Shook, senior vice-president and general manager at the Dial Corporation remarked:

The Dial Corp. is proud to be in partnership with Donald Trump and Mark Burnett and excited to make *The Apprentice* the centerpiece of two comprehensive marketing programs. We'll capitalize on what amounts to nearly three hours of national television exposure on one of the most popular NBC series and we'll be gearing up for sustained business growth long after the next *Apprentice* is hired (Schiller, 2006).

In another interview, Trump added, “I think sales of Soft Scrub and Renuzit will go through the roof” (Schiller, 2006).

When the episodes aired, the program’s commercial spots also included either Soft Scrub or Renuzit advertisements that were being showcased in that particular episode. The viewers watched the contestants handle the cleaning products, discuss benefits of the cleaning products, and were exposed to logos, and other marketing

materials. In both episodes, the program's viewers also witnessed the entire process of the teams writing, acting, and producing their respective Webisode and commercial spot for both products. Also included with the commercial breaks, were spots that encouraged viewers to log onto *The Apprentice* website to view either the Webisodes or commercials that the contestants had produced. Links were included to both Dial-sponsored websites for both Soft Scrub and Renuzit. On those sites, the viewers could register for contests that tied into the launch of the new products, and other Web promotions such as coupons and samples of the new product.

As mentioned this 3D product mapping is all encompassing and became very Escher-like in the Dial case. Viewers watched a program about Soft Scrub or Renuzit viewed the production of the contestant's Webisodes and commercials about the products, watched spot advertisement for the products. Additionally, viewers were given the opportunity to view the *Apprentice*-produced Webisodes or commercials again via the website, and the opportunity to enter contests for prizes, or acquire samples or coupons for later purchase of the products. All of these elements created a 3D mapping of the product experience.

Other companies also took advantage of the unique platform of *The Apprentice* to use it to roll out their new products as well. The 7-Eleven Corporation used *The Apprentice* in its marketing campaign to roll out a new pizza/sandwich called the P'EatZZA Sandwich. In the episode the team was tasked to promote the new sandwich for the convenience food chain. The teams were free to set the price points on the sandwich. 7-Eleven was actually able to look at the footage shot for the episode in order to gauge the reception of the sandwich and to test the price points. One team set their

price point high and was unsuccessful, and lost the task. In this case, the sponsor was able to use *The Apprentice* episode as a test market. The 7-Eleven Corporation used this information and set their price point in line with the winning team's price point, which was just below four dollars.

Reviews on the sandwich's taste were mixed, but in 2006, results from IAG Research data from a Brand Opinion Index poll, showed that the fourth most remembered television integration that year was the 7-Eleven placement on *The Apprentice*. The respondents not only remembered the brand but also reported a positive shift in their opinion of the brand (Consoli, 2007). Joe DePinto, CEO of 7-Eleven, said, "*The Apprentice* has proven that an appearance on the show can dramatically impact demand for a product" (Baker, 2006). Sponsor satisfaction of this sort was repeated again and again.

Due to the program's exposure factor, popularity and platform, Procter & Gamble decided to use *The Apprentice* as part of their marketing campaign to launch their new product, Crest Vanilla Mint toothpaste (Russell, 2007, p. 6). *The Apprentice* presented a perfect platform for Procter & Gamble to launch their new product and generate excitement (O'Brien, 2004). The contestants were asked to design a campaign to create as much "buzz" as possible on the streets of New York, to help introduce and launch the new toothpaste. Each team began with seed money of fifty thousand dollars. This budget was large and not typical of the usual amount of seed money that was given to the contestants to complete their tasks. Since the budget was so large, one team was able to hire celebrity baseball sports star, Mike Piazza, to make a street appearance and actually

use the product. The other team conducted a circus-type event with circus performers and raffled off cash prizes. The team that hired Piazza was deemed the winner.

This was a good advertising buy for the Procter & Gamble company. On the day the episode aired, Crest received three million hits on its website for the promotional tie-in with the program. During the three week period following the broadcast, the tie-in generated more than ten million unique visitor hits to the Crest website (O'Brien, 2004). The executives at Procter & Gamble considered the campaign to be their "most successful online promotion" that they ever had. In addition, Procter & Gamble was able to harvest registered names to add to its Crest.com database from an online contest that was held in conjunction with the airing of *The Apprentice* episode (O'Brien, 2004). The contest offered the opportunity for a trip to the finale of *The Apprentice*, and accommodations at the Trump Hotel. Eighty five thousand people entered the contest. Special retail displays were also linked to *The Apprentice*, leveraging the brand as part of its campaign for the new Crest Vanilla Mint toothpaste. Bryan McCleary, director of external relations for Crest remarked, "Our results [from *The Apprentice* partnership] greatly exceeded our expectations in terms of response from consumers and retailers," (Cuneo et al., 2004) . Successful results like this, kept the sponsorship prices high for Trump and Burnett.

The Apprentice brand was also leveraged in other ways. Some sponsors had the important goal of wanting to boost sales. In 2005, Domino's Pizza had an average delivery of seven hundred and fifty thousand pizzas to homes nationwide on Thursday nights. *The Apprentice* aired on Thursday nights. Domino's Pizza hoped to increase its sales through an affiliation with the Thursday broadcast of *The Apprentice* ("NBC's

‘Apprentice’ Candidates,” 2005). Through their advertising efforts, Domino's also encouraged the idea of “viewing parties” in which groups would gather to watch the episode and order Domino’s Pizza to take advantage of a “555 deal” (“NBC’s ‘Apprentice’ Candidates,” 2005).

As part of the storyline of *The Apprentice*, the contestants were given the opportunity to develop two new Domino’s pizza items. Both teams developed a meatball pizza variation. While Domino’s did not use the winning team’s pizza, it did offer an *Apprentice*-inspired pizza, the American Classic Cheeseburger Pizza, in conjunction with the appearance in the episode. Ken Calwell, chief marketing officer of Domino’s Pizza, said, “This is a great opportunity to showcase our brand and company in a very popular program. We're the first pizza company to be featured on the show, which ranks in the top ten most viewed television shows by our customers” (“NBC’s ‘Apprentice’ Candidates,” 2005, n.p.).

Domino's also supported the campaign by running two commercials for the tie-in. In one, Trump answers the door to a Domino’s deliveryman arriving with a Domino’s 555 Deal. Trump tries to negotiate with the driver to take credit for the deal. The second spot features a Domino’s driver delivering Domino's new American Classic Cheeseburger pizza to Trump’s office. Trump likes the product so much, he again tries to take credit for the idea (Johannes, 2005).

Viewers were also encouraged to go to Domino’s newly-revamped Website to play online games and enter a sweepstakes. One game was the “Be the Donald Instant Win Game” in which the winner would “Experience a Trump-Style Manhattan Weekend.” This prize actually consisted of a deluxe trip to New York City for two, three

nights at Trump's International Hotel and Tower, limousine service during the stay, a helicopter tour of Manhattan, tickets to a Broadway play and \$1,000 spending money. The other game available to those that registered on the site was the "Deliver to the Donald" game which consisted of catching falling pizza boxes and cheeseburgers (Johannes, 2005). The entire Domino's campaign was quite elaborate. Later, Calwell also remarked, "Partnering with a piping hot television show like *The Apprentice* presents a great opportunity to reinforce our connection with popular culture. We are thrilled with the affiliation that links our brand with hip, young consumers" ("NBC's 'Apprentice' Candidates," 2005, n.p.).

The first quarter of the year is always a slow time for restaurants. So the large burger chain of Burger King decided to partner with *The Apprentice* to help boost sales in the sluggish first quarter. Russ Klein, the chief marketing officer of Burger King, said, "Our first reaction was that it would be an opportunity to create a three hundred sixty degree event as viewers see this unfold overnight from their living rooms to the Burger Kings near them" (Elliott, 2005, n.p.). Besides sales, just as Domino's had wanted, they were also aiming for a better connection to the audience. Jeff Hicks, president and chief executive at Crispin Porter, the ad agency that worked with Burger King for this promotion, said, "We want to make a connection. We want to make Burger King the kind of brand people would want to wear on a T-shirt. We want the pop culture dialogue to include Burger King" (Elliott, 2005, n.p.).

The two teams in the sponsored episode had the opportunity to select one of six specialty sandwiches for their team to market and sell at a Burger King restaurant. Burger King promoted the winning team's sandwich, The Western Angus Burger, releasing it to

seven thousand eight hundred restaurants around the country (Elliott, 2005). In-store advertisements included photographs of Trump and “As Seen on *The Apprentice*” headlines (Elliott, 2005). One Burger King commercial that introduced the sandwich, featured an announcer declaring, “Try it now or you're fired,” tying the spot to the Burger King sponsorship of *The Apprentice* (Elliott, 2005).

Dairy Queen, the frozen dessert chain, wanted to partner with *The Apprentice* and leverage the brand for a promotional tie-in in hopes of increasing sales. *The Apprentice* brand was tied-in to Dairy Queen’s promotion to find the “Blizzard *Apprentice*” (see Appendix A). The winner of the Blizzard promotion was to receive a job to be involved in the development of new Blizzard flavors, a fifty thousand dollar signing bonus, the opportunity to appear in a national advertising campaign, and a trip to Hawaii to attend the Dairy Queen Franchise Exposition. Dairy Queen spent two and one half million dollars for the promotion with the bulk of the money going towards *The Apprentice* licensing fees. The company estimated the media exposure to be worth ten million dollars in spot advertising, which more than compensated for the price they paid. In their case, even if sales did not increase, it was still a winning proposition for Dairy Queen (Cebrzynski, 2005).

Another sponsor wishing to increase sales and reach a younger audience, Levi Strauss, partnered with *The Apprentice* in an attempt to turn around their sales slump. The company was desperate to reach the prime demographic that the program garnered and turn around a seven year sales slide (Malone, 2004). The two teams were charged with creating an innovative in-store promotional catalog to drive the message that the Levi Strauss company had a universal appeal (Peterson, 2004).

The winning team used their members as models for a promotional catalog. The catalog consisted of a rotating “fit wheel” that highlighted Levi's various lines and various fit types. Each fit type featured a picture of the way each fit style of the jeans looked on the models' rear ends (Peterson, 2004). Four days after the episode ran, viewers were still seeking out “*Apprentice Jeans*” on the Yahoo! search engine. Yahoo! reported back to Levi Strauss that the core age of those seeking out the jeans were aged thirty five to forty four. It was surmised that the resulting age group, which fell short of the targeted age group, was a result of the placement being butt-centric, an area of the body that middle-aged people are highly concerned about (Oser, 2005). While it was not the demographic that Levi's was hoping for, the placement did give them valuable marketing information to help determine how to cope with their slide in sales. As such, it was still deemed as a success by the company.

Life and mortgage insurer Genworth Financial Services had a much different goal in mind for partnering with *The Apprentice*. They sponsored the end finale task, sponsoring two charity events that span two weeks of episodes as the finalists battle it out with the last task. One of the charity events involved a polo game and the other a basketball game. The company was seeking to establish a brand identity independent of its more famous former corporate parent, the General Electric Company. Company spokesman Michael Kachel added that the company would also gain additional exposure, through international syndication of *The Apprentice*. Genworth Financial Services anticipated that in the end the brand would be seen by forty million viewers over the course of two weeks (Goch, 2005).

The company's executives felt this was a creative way to quickly build name recognition. Buzz Richmond, senior vice president of brand marketing for Genworth said:

Branding today is more challenging and complex than ever and successful companies need to take advantage of the many relevant media technologies available to them to build recognition and acceptance for their products and services (Moeller, 2006).

Richmond later noted that the company received strong brand recognition as a result of being a sponsor of *The Apprentice* and that the exposure did help the company to jump start the establishing of the Genworth Financial brand identity (Moeller, 2006).

Some sponsors partnered with the brand, relying on a new in-program designed products, in lieu of an existing product. In these cases, the contestants on *The Apprentice* were charged with the task of developing these new products in an attempt to increase revenues for the sponsor. Staples, an office supply company, was one of the companies that signed up to be a sponsor and wanted the contestants to design a new office accessory that would be licensed between *The Apprentice* brand and Staples.

The winning design was a desk organizer licensed as the tie-in product of "The Desk *Apprentice*." That evening of the broadcast, the viewers were directed to search that term on Yahoo! and to locate the corresponding purchase page. The total amount of merchandise of this one product, sold in two hours time, totaled five hundred and twenty five thousand dollars in sales. Staples vice-president of brand programs, Cathy Cusack said of the episode, "It was thirty minutes of pure talking about Staples. The show editors really did a nice job showcasing Staples" (Lieb, 2005, n.p.). This winning product

continues to be a success for Staples and now, more than five years later, this product is still available at Staples with the registered trademark name, Staples The Desk *Apprentice* Rotating Desk Organizer (see Appendix B). This product is a reminder of the powerful platform that *The Apprentice* provided its sponsors.

Another company that joined with *The Apprentice* that wanted this same type of in-program product developed was American Eagle, a youth driven clothing company. The contestants were charged with the development of “wearable technology designs” for integration into American Eagle’s existing spring line. The designs accommodated cell phones, CD players, computers and MP3 players. While it is not shown in the episode, the contestants did receive additional help from American Eagle’s design team. Michael J. Leedy, chief marketing officer of American Eagle, remarked, “It was interesting to give [*the* contestants] *the* task to see if they could come up with anything new and innovative” (Derby, 2005). American Eagle also launched a corresponding contest in its stores and on its website after the show aired. The winner of the contest was to receive a new American Eagle wardrobe, and a trip for two to New York to watch *the* live finale of *The Apprentice* (Derby, 2005). Additionally, taking advantage of the technology-inspired theme, Intel, which does not sell directly to consumers, also became a partner in the cross-media bandwagon. At the end of the show, viewers were encouraged to go to an Intel/*Apprentice*-branded sweepstakes (Lieb, 2005).

Ancillary Exposure for Sponsors

The use of the Internet began early in the series. Throughout Season One, *The Apprentice* encouraged the viewers to sign onto their NBC website. Once the viewers landed there, they were given the opportunity to click-through to the corresponding

Yahoo! site and/or the individual sponsors websites. Not only was a wealth of original content provided, but additional marketing as well. Viewers could learn more about the products embedded in the program, enter contests, get coupons, or sign-up for samples of a particular product. (Lieb, 2005). If the viewers did so, not only did this result in an increase in traffic for NBC, Yahoo!, and the sponsoring company, but also provided names to help build the sponsor's database allowing them to target this audience for future marketing efforts.

As viewers visited each entities websites, it gave each individual company an opportunity to retrieve additional marketing information through use of Internet metrics tools, thereby gaining more valuable insight. As the measurement of the effectiveness of product placement is always a challenge, these types of tools help to solve some of the measurement issues (Woodson, 2006). A television producer, Ben Silverman, executive producer of *The Office*, acknowledged that the Internet presents many opportunities for integrated marketing. However he notes that most producers and marketers believe that there needs to be a successful mix between television advertising and the Internet, but "television is still the engine driving the bus" (Woodson, 2006, n.p.).

The Apprentice was skillful in leading the viewer to their Internet site where a host of material was posted, and a link to the sponsors web page. Viewers were being manipulated, but they were cooperative participants in this process due to the backdoor nature of this type of marketing and television sponsorship. Half of the battle for sponsors is already won at that point. With advertising clutter in the marketplace, just getting consumers to pay attention to their product is remarkable. Once the viewer's interest has been piqued, then the sponsor can go further with product information and enticements to

purchase, such as coupons or samples. Yahoo! vice president Jim Moloshok remarked, “If you can complete the loop, product placements like Mark Burnett is doing, are one of the most effective ways to get people engaged with a product” (Dehnart, 2005). The viewer involvement process is a powerful tool in *The Apprentice*’s commercial success.

As another effort to extend the program’s promotion efforts, *The Apprentice* producers fortified the integration packages by partnering directly with Yahoo!, effectively leveraging their branding with electronic prowess. The production company formed a relationship with Yahoo! in an effort to produce, host and sell advertising for the official website, and integrate *The Apprentice* content throughout the Yahoo! network. Much of the content featured on the Yahoo!-sponsored site, presented exclusive web content (“*Apprentice* Hires Yahoo!,” 2004). The cross-media promotion with Yahoo! proved to be quite lucrative for all parties involved. *The Apprentice* is also credited with creating this innovative type of Internet cross-media promotion (“Companies Cash In,” 2004).

General Motors’ Pontiac division sponsored a task in Season Three that was built around its new Solstice roadster. The sponsorship included the Yahoo! branding. Sarah Ross, senior director of partnership and integrated content marketing at Yahoo! Inc., commented on the partnership with *The Apprentice* and General Motors. She said, “Contestants on the show made a brochure for the vehicle, and then viewers were encouraged to search for the car through the keyword ‘*Apprentice* car,’ which brought up a link to the Yahoo! Autos homepage, where viewers were sent to Pontiac.com” (Woodson, 2006, n.p.). This resulted in two hundred and twelve thousand hits on the

Pontiac website, which was an increase of one thousand and four hundred percent of web traffic (Graser & Stanley, 2005).

Pontiac's goal was to sell one thousand cars in ten days. The results greatly exceeded their goal, as five thousand cars were spoken for in forty-one minutes (Lieb, 2005). In the end, a total of twenty one thousand *Apprentice* viewers printed a certificate to bring to their local dealer to order a new Pontiac Solstice (Graser et al., 2005). This was also important because this campaign indicated viewer interest in high end purchases also. When looking at the products and product category that tend to be presented in most of the episodes, most of the placements are not high end, luxury or expensive products (see Appendix C). The trend in product/brand placement of *The Apprentice* was to present affordable products that the viewership could actually afford to purchase en masse. This in turn, helped to keep the integration fees high, as point of sale purchases proved to be profitable for the sponsors.

The partnership of *The Apprentice* and Yahoo! not only provided an extra platform for the sponsors, but also provided Yahoo! brand integration as well. Yahoo! and its logo is seen in many areas on the program. When contestants were fired and "sent down to the street," a yellow taxi-cab was waiting. Masterfully, the signage on top of the taxi-cab was a lit banner for Yahoo! (Lieb, 2005). Yahoo! Local was another Yahoo! product that was also featured. It was not only featured in the lit signs on the taxi-cabs, but also in the *Motel 666* episode.

For this episode, the task required the program's contestants to renovate rooms in two old seaside motels in New Jersey. Yahoo! Local employees were brought in to hand out surveys to people that stayed in the renovated rooms. This inclusion gave Yahoo!

Local more exposure and were clearly included for the branding opportunity, as anyone could have handed out the customer surveys. Yahoo! Hot Jobs was also included throughout the series. The Yahoo! corporation was also given an opportunity to sponsor a charity event in Season Four, the Yahoo! All Star Comedy Benefit. Not only was there a myriad of Yahoo! inclusion throughout the series, but Yahoo! also had the opportunity to gain favorable public relations by hosting *The Apprentice* charity event.

Clearly there were other benefits for the sponsors that appeared on *The Apprentice* program. For each company that was sponsored in the episode, Trump allowed for that respective company to present a couple of upper level management representatives from the company, usually to assist in judging the competition between the two teams. As Trump introduced these guest judges, he gave accolades to both their respective company and the industry that they represented. According to Trump, the companies sponsoring the episode were always “the best or the biggest,” as he also cited gross receipts from each of the sponsoring companies and the worth of the industry as well.

The “war rooms” where most of the planning was accomplished by the teams was always littered with the sponsoring company’s promotional material; posters, mugs, caps, shirts and actual product. Not only were logos plastered, but many times the contestants were dressed in the company’s full uniform during the task, or at the very least, the sponsors’ logo colors. Many times, Trump would also wear a sponsor-coordinating colored tie along with his boardroom assistants also echoing the sponsors logo colors.

Many times during the course of the tasks, the contestants were brought to the factory that manufactured the sponsors’ products or showcased the facilities used for training their employees. One of the episodes that this occurred was the visit made to the

Ciao Bella ice cream factory. In this particular episode, the process of production of the product was shown to viewers. Another example of this convention was the episode that the teams went to the manufacturing plant to make Mars M&M M-Amazing candy bars as part of the competition. In some cases, the sponsor had the opportunity to showcase their corporate headquarters. On many occasions, the corporate judges that had been brought in to judge the tasks would deliver the results of the competition at the headquarters of their company.

And as an added bonus, a week later, the sponsor also received additional exposure from the lengthy recap that Trump gave at the beginning of each episode. Trump narrated and showed footage from the previous episode making sure to give all of the detail about the previous week's sponsor and task wrapped around the product presentation. Another ancillary promotion was the titles of the episodes. At times, these episode titles contained the sponsor's name or part of the sponsor's name or representative products. With titles such as "Whopper 101," "Airstream of Consciousness," "Summer of Sam's," and "Backs Against the Wal-Mart," there is no doubt as to the sponsor of that particular episode. The episode title is generally not presented to the viewing audience via the normal broadcast, however the titles are utilized in post- referencing of episodes on both official and unofficial websites that report on *The Apprentice*, or have episodes to view, or episode information and photos.

Another ancillary mode that boosts the sponsorship deal is when sponsors are presented in the form of a reward. This provided another type of promotion, that actually elevated the brand even more. Not only was the sponsor presented, but was presented as a prized reward for the winning team, replete with high quality inference. Many fine dining

establishments were presented as rewards. As many restaurants are showcased, the point is driven home that these places are not only expensive, but also exclusive. Presentation of these places included special private dining areas of the restaurant reserved for selected customers, displays of expensive wine, and displays of expensive specialty foods. These establishments were able to showcase their most unique qualities, their best food, and were given a moniker of exclusivity and meeting the Trump standard. In Season Two, the winning team is sent to Petrossian, a fine caviar purveyor in New York. The winners dined with many expensive caviars and Moet Champagne flowed in abundance. In Season Three, the winning team was provided with a dining opportunity at the 21 Club in New York. The restaurant's four million dollar wine cellar was featured with one contestant remarking that the restaurant is "very exclusive." In Season Five one of the rewards was at the famed Alain Ducasse at the Essex House restaurant. The winning team arrived to waiters in tails serving a very expensive six-course meal that featured rare white imported truffles. These truffles cost four thousand dollars per pound and were flown in from Alba, Italy.

As mentioned earlier, the Chrysler Crossfire was one sponsored product that had been rolled out on the program. At the end of Season One, Bill Ransic the winner of the coveted *Apprentice* spot, was also awarded with a Chrysler Crossfire. Trump gave him the keys to his new car, and the cameras followed him down to the street, as he enthusiastically jumped in and sped away. As a double-headed placement, not only is the Chrysler Crossfire a great, new, exciting car from Chrysler, but also a reward, fitting of the winning *Apprentice*. Just as Ransic won a car, so did the winner of Season Three, Kendra Todd. She won a General Motors Pontiac Solstice at the live finale. The Pontiac

Solstice had been featured in a previous episode in that season, so this also had the distinction of the double-headed promotion. Pontiac was presented again in the form of a reward for Sean Yazbeck, the winner of Season Five. However, this time a different car model was presented, a Pontiac G6 sports car. This is powerful placement for an expensive, high-end product.

As part of supporting their dominant interests in profit, Trump and Burnett placed supreme importance on the commercial uses of *The Apprentice* series. Since the commercial aspect was the most important aspect to the producers, this had to be maintained. Over the six seasons, Trump had been known to fire contestants for not providing the level of marketing that he expected for the corporate sponsors. The contestants were keenly aware of that fact as Trump would take disciplinary action for not doing so.

Some of the contestants veered off the track of serving the sponsor. One of the contestants, Bowie Hogg, was fired by Trump for his poor performance in merchandising for the task's sponsor, Planet Hollywood. In Season Three, contestant Tara, was fired for attempting to make a social statement about Black urban culture, instead of servicing the Sony Playstation sponsor. Time and time again, Trump made it clear that the top priority was to serve the sponsoring company to the fullest extent. In Season Five, contestant Lenny was in line to be fired for implementing a very bad advertising campaign for Norwegian Cruise Lines, that included a dirty castaway adrift on a piece of flotsam. However, Lenny was not brought into the boardroom by Dan, the PM of the task. This circumvented Trump's retribution for not serving the sponsor, by Dan not giving Trump

the opportunity to fire Lenny. To exact his punishment, he fired Dan for not bringing Lenny into the boardroom.

Manufacturers invest precious advertising dollars in programs to reach their target audience, thereby exacting direct control over the shows' storyline and creative design (Brennen et al., 1999). However, lack of control is especially common for placements in unscripted television programs. Because of the nature of RTV, marketers do not have complete control over how their product is represented in the show. Even though manufacturers spend many thousands, perhaps millions, of dollars for the opportunity to showcase their brands and products, problems do occur in the area of representation of the products and the context of how placements actually appear in the broadcast.

While product/brand placement generally has favorable results, there are some blunders that have occurred that have resulted in the placement being detrimental to the brand. In the case of *Die Hard 2* (1990), 20th Century Fox signed a twenty thousand dollar contract with Black & Decker for their Univolt cordless drill to appear in the film (Colford, 1990). However, the director was not happy with the scene that contained the placement and subsequently removed it from the final cut. The placement was part of a larger promotional campaign by Black & Decker for the product. Black & Decker brought suit against the studio and the parties settled out of court.

In 1997, Reebok brought suit against Tristar Pictures for failing to comply with their placement contract with the film *Jerry Maguire* (1996). The one and one half million dollar agreement entailed that the product would appear in a favorable way, and Reebok would appear in the ending credits for providing n kind services which included props, equipment, and additional advertising support (Elliott, 1997). Within the context

of the scene, the placement was less than favorable, and Reebok did not appear in the credits. The case was settled out of court with Reebok receiving ten million dollars in restitution for the placement debacle (Sandler, 1996)

Advertisers have learned that to avoid a negative outcome, they need to remain a part of the creative process from the projects inception in order to protect the image of their respective product/brand. Most sponsors of *The Apprentice* that became partners with the program assisted in the decision as to how the product would be integrated into the respective episode. Ideally, the brand image and the products represented should align with the corporation's expectations and be promoted to their satisfaction. Trump and Burnett had a good reputation among corporations about the control of favorable placements. However for Dove, even with the tight controls, the creative process unraveled and the one million dollar placement was compromised (Graser et al., 2005).

In the Dove Cool Moisture Body Wash episode, both teams created terrible ads. One involved a female chef stroking a cucumber held by a male colleague, who selected another man over her as a romantic partner, which was dubbed "vegetable porn" (Graser et al., 2005; Russell, 2007, p. 13). The other involved a jogger rubbing the body wash all over his face in the middle of a race to perk himself up. Dove executives had not exercised their due diligence with *The Apprentice* producers to control the content of the segment. They did not view the ads until it was too late. As part of Trump's attempt at damage control, Trump taped TV spots to assist Dove in a multi-layered advertising campaign. Trump also offered a contest surrounding the new Dove body wash with the winner to attend the finale of *The Apprentice*. When the episode aired, three thousand people per second visited the Dove website. Dove sent out four hundred thousand

samples of the product and collected new names for its database. In the end, everything was resolved, but could have ended in a disaster for Unilever's roll out of the product (Graser et al., 2005).

For some industry insiders, Dairy Queen's involvement in a 2005 episode of *The Apprentice* was listed among the worst advertainment efforts that year. In that particular episode, contestants were asked to create a mascot for Dairy Queen's Blizzard ice cream product. One of the contestants, Toral, called the task "stupid" and "humiliating" and decided she would not take part because it would cause embarrassment to her on behalf of her family. Also, there was no footage of any Dairy Queen stores nor any Blizzard products that were featured in the episode (Graser, 2006). This omission was considered a great oversight. As far as Toral, of course, Trump fired her for not serving the sponsor.

As the seasons progressed, the program, while extremely viable, did experience a waning viewer interest and a consistent slide in ratings. The ratings dropped from eighteen and one half million viewers to twelve and one half million viewers over the course of the series (von Hoffman, 2006). However, a media executive remarked that since *The Apprentice* overall represented brand interests well in their integration deals, despite the ratings decline, the program still showed a record of contributing to "a real impact on sales" for products that were integrated into the episodes (Goetzl & Friedman, 2006). Clearly ratings did not affect the fact that sales rose drastically for the companies that were involved in the episodes.

Whatever the cost that a company had paid for an integration deal throughout the six seasons, *The Apprentice* continued to deliver results for the companies that it forged alliances with throughout the 2004-2006 television seasons. They also have the

distinction of being the first to devise a highly successful formula for modern day sponsorship in RTV programming. The strength of this lies at the point of sale; sponsors loved the results from the exposure on *The Apprentice*. *The Apprentice* remained a favorite of placement vehicles among marketers and was able to produce a gilded cage of RTV commerce for the corporations that forged advertising deals with the program.

All Things Trump

Certainly Trump was no stranger to the world of promotion. Trump, who has been in the public eye for decades, is quite savvy in the use of the media to gain attention. A television program was a logical place for Trump to delve to continue his promotion of himself and, in this case, to create an advertising space the likes of which have not been seen, even in the 1950s and early 1960s heyday of television sponsorship.

Donald Trump is an example of an American entrepreneur, albeit in a flamboyant form. His vision and skills in negotiating and developing commercial real estate were nurtured in New York City and have grown to a world-wide portfolio of many properties and corporations. A common thread with most entrepreneurs is experiencing and overcoming episodes of failure or great hardship and Trump is no exception. His career has hit several low notes including bankruptcy. Through Trump's many tribulations, he has always had the ability to re-invent himself. His fortune was estimated in 1997 to be worth close to two billion dollars ("Donald Trump," 2006). In 2010, with a volatile stock market and economy, Trump is reported to still be worth two billion dollars, though he claims five billion ("The World's Billionaires," 2010). Acknowledging Trump's accomplishments over the years is worth noting, along with his ability to bounce back even through multiple bankruptcies.

One of Trump's tenets is, "Don't be afraid to blow your own horn." And "toot his own horn" he does. With Trump, everything that he does, touches, and associates his name with, he touts as always being "the biggest" and "the best." Trump is a quintessential carnival barker, much as P. T. Barnum was. Trump has remarked, "I am the largest real estate developer in New York, own model agencies, casinos, Miss Universe Pageant, jet liners, golf courses, and private resorts." Trump has also developed his name into a brand that conveys wealth and power. Today, Trump has amassed an empire that includes his own signature collections, real estate holdings, golf specific holdings, entertainment specific holdings, hotels, education services, pageants, productions, model management, books, Websites, and other various retail products, including signature vodka.

Trump's branding into the retail sector includes his own signature collection of men's apparel. The line includes watches, suits, neckwear, sunglasses and small leather goods. Macy's is one of the retail outlets that carry the Trump line. This line has been featured on several episodes of *The Apprentice*. One episode in particular featured his line of signature wear being donated to a group of men that had experienced some amount of misfortune in their careers. Trump gathered the men, and with the help of *The Apprentice* candidates, outfitted each man with a Trump signature suit. This was done to help each man establish a new beginning, and a new lease on life. The idea was that, being provided with a Trump designed suit, would somehow convey new confidence and a new spirit, one that would surely land them a new job.

While consumers were sporting his apparel, they could also drink his water. Trump Ice was his foray into the bottled water market. He conducted the product launch

on an episode of *The Apprentice*. The entire episode centered around the launch of the Trump branded water. The contestants were charged with going out into the city of New York and selling as many palettes of water as possible within a matter of hours. From that point on, Trump-branded water has been featured in every season and in most of the episodes of *The Apprentice*. The program effectively functions as a vehicle for all things that are emblazoned with Trump's name. With the emphasis of the illusive power of Trump, somehow, these products carry the mystique of a transfer of power through these items to the bearer.

In some cases Trump enters licensing partnerships and charges sizeable licensing fees for use of his name and *The Apprentice* name. This advances the brands, but reduces the risk and cash outlay and allows for growth in brand equity. The partners must hand over some of the control of the project or products in exchange for Trump's name. Examples include real estate projects, such as his Chicago condominiums, board games, and an iPhone application of Trump Tycoon, sponsored by Hands-On-Mobile.

Trump Tower is prominently featured in *The Apprentice*, as much of the program is shot in the Trump Tower. The contestant suite is also in Trump Tower, along with the constructed boardroom, Trump's offices, and Trump's penthouse suite. Many times Trump met with the contestants on the rooftop of Trump Tower. This allowed for great aerial views of not only his building, but also entourage of contestants, at his feet.

Throughout the seasons, Trump has also showcased many of the Trump businesses that are also housed within Trump Tower. Restaurants, cafes, ice cream parlor, and other Trump-owned business have been featured. Trump placed the contestants in a very large suite in Trump World Tower and has remarked, "You see why Trump is

Trump. Everything is luxury; the best of everything.” Trump National Golf Course is also featured on a regular basis. Along with his golf courses, many times Trump is depicted playing golf with star professional golfers such as Annika Storenham.

Trump also used the show to maximize the exposure benefit and to showcase not only his current projects, but also his future projects. At the end of the live finale of Season Three, Trump plugged the upcoming Broadway production of *The Apprentice* theatre production. Trump would usually do a promotion for the following season of *The Apprentice*, encouraging people to apply for their opportunity at their chance at becoming *The Apprentice*.

As part of Trump’s promotional machine, New York city actually acts as not only a character in *The Apprentice*, but as another part of Trump’s portfolio. Trump who clearly loves New York City, showcases the city at every turn. More than likely, this was his contribution to assist tourism in New York City, which was still feeling the long-term effects from the 9-11 tragedy. Trump never misses an opportunity to shed a spotlight on not only the city itself, and its bustle and glamour, but also its importance to commerce. In the series, Trump acted as an effective ambassador for the city of New York. By including New York City as part and parcel of *The Apprentice*, he also created a type of a travelogue, frequently showcasing landmarks throughout the city. Trump’s true affection for the city of New York and its prosperity was always apparent.

Trump has encountered some legal issues that have acted to tarnish some of the Trump promotional shine and *The Apprentice* brand as well. In 2007, Trump was sued for ageism from a forty-nine-year old Massachusetts man that claims he was discriminated against in his run for applying to be a candidate on *The Apprentice* program. This does

work in tandem with results that have been discovered in the research of the age of the contestants that have been cast for the program.

In April 2010, The New York State Education Department accused the Trump University of breaking the law by calling itself a “university.” The president of the school agreed to change the name to “Trump Education” to be in compliance with the law (Feiden, 2010). Other legal issues have shadowed the name and success of Trump’s educational programs. As reported in the New York Post (Schram, 2010) a federal class action lawsuit was launched by Taria Makaeff of Southern California. She has filed a suit alleging that the New York-based university founded by Donald Trump, scammed her out of nearly sixty thousand dollars over the course of a year, from her attendance to related seminars in Orange County in 2008. She purchased the basic seminar for fifteen hundred dollars and purchased the “Gold” seminar for thirty five thousand dollars, and spent thousands more on workshops. She claims that the school promised her a “complete real-estate education,” a “one-year apprenticeship” and a one-on-one mentorship, none of which she claims to have received. Trump University says that Makaeff’s suit is “completely without merit.”

It would be impossible for the viewers of *The Apprentice* to escape Trump’s heavy-handed marketing of “all things Trump.” Viewers are taught that they will convey power if they use his products. Viewers are also taught that Trump is a modern day Midas, and truly has transformational power, not only for his eventual Apprentice, but also for the masses of viewers that consume his program, and to his hope, his products as well. This also acts as fantastic PR for Trump, showcasing every good turn that he makes and his generous philanthropy.

Business Discourse in *The Apprentice*

Boyle (2008) points out that the rise of a program based on business was timely since the viewing audience was made up of a generation that were more entrepreneurial in nature. Kinnick and Parton (2005) remark that, “*The Apprentice* stands alone as the first television show to use business savvy and business scenarios as the basis for competition...” (p. 430). While the time was right for such a program, this in no way positions the program, or Trump for that matter, as an expert or lending an expert voice. However, this was the position that *The Apprentice* was lifted to. The “expert guidance” factor was built on artificial aspects of the program.

As part of *The Apprentice*’s manufacturing of reality, its televisual discourse may also affect how people view business and the prevailing corporate culture in America. Each episode had a lesson, but the entire series has an over-arching narrative (McGuigan, 2008, p. 311). In fact, the program presents itself as an authoritative text as demonstrated by Trump’s business tenets in action. As such, it is possible that some viewers may have used *The Apprentice* as a guide to corporate expectations in business. Kinnick and Parton (2005) suggest:

Television depictions of the workplace that consistently emphasize the same characteristics over time will be accepted as realistic depictions of the workplace, and viewers will learn vicariously about workplace norms, value, and effective and ineffective behaviours from the role models they see on television (p. 434).

Kinnick and Parton have also raised concerns of viewers normalizing the messages that are present in *The Apprentice* RTV text. This could also give rise to other business dialogue at the “water cooler.” It also spurred debates on business tactics and ethics on

blogs and other user-created content sites (Lair, 2007). Most of the time, the underlying assumption was that *The Apprentice* was presenting authentic solutions to authentic business problems, and established best business practices.

Kinnick and Parton (2005) were also keenly aware that *The Apprentice* program was being used as a media text to create university business classes using the program as a model for business practices:

Because the show is being legitimated by college educators and career advice media as a means to learn career success strategies, and because the show draws a vast audience, the messages that it conveys about communication in the workplace are particularly influential and worthy of study. (Kinnick & Parton, 2005, p. 434)

This gave power to the text of *The Apprentice* and incredible reach as it had been elevated to educational status and legitimized by some universities and other educational institutions. Once again, Trump and *The Apprentice* was set up as expert in business.

Some critics contend that *The Apprentice* does not represent American business. However, college professors have used the show to provide examples for their class material (Kinnick et al., 2005, p. 430). Nonetheless, some have built entire classes around the program such as the University of Washington's course titled "Management Lessons Learned from *The Apprentice*" (Gyenes, 2004; Ho, 2004).

Trump has also claimed that many business schools have made *The Apprentice* mandatory viewing and that he has received many letters asking that the episodes be packaged for the educational market (Trump, 2004; Kinnick & Parton, 2005, p. 430). The legitimacy of *The Apprentice* for educators may be that it does highlight the need for

effective communication skills, regardless of the role that one occupies in the workplace (Kinnick & Parton, 2005, p. 448). As young people are beginning to form their perceptions of the business world and its norms of behavior and strategies for success, indeed, *The Apprentice* may be used as a guide (Kinnick & Parton, 2005, p. 429).

The analysis also showed that the skill of persuading others was an important business tenet in the competition, and by extension to business skill. Another important skill that was disproportionally depicted is the successful art of negotiating. This was presented with the assumption that viewers would be in the position to successfully utilize these skills. Certainly, the use of these business skills depends on one's level of management and management role (Kinnick & Parton, 2005). The series depicted a narrow view on this.

The Apprentice opened a door to a dialogue of the inner workings of the Trump organization that was unprecedented. The show provided its viewers the opportunity to peak was inside the machinations of a corporate mogul's life, or at least what the producers wanted the viewers to see. By allowing cameras into Trump's world, viewer's thoughts, resulting feelings, and perhaps their dialogue about big business in America was affected (Tressler, 2006, p. 62). Some of the business lessons to be learned were from the short asides that Trump gave during the episodes, referred to by Kinnick & Parton, (2005) as "Trumpisms." These asides were revealing of some of Trump's business philosophies (see Appendix D). The Trumpisms usually addressed a business lesson with respect to the folly of a contestant or team for that particular episode.

Duffy et al. (2006) thoroughly analyzed the content of the episodes and their results indicated that *The Apprentice* taught viewers lessons not only about business but

also the ideology of capitalist aspects and the use of business practices and successes as a model for the viewers. They found that the content was laden with advertising and promotion which in turn also advanced capitalism. In their estimation, *The Apprentice* effectively celebrated business, selling and promotion (Duffy et al., 2006, p. 7).

In Lair's research, he found that the strength in *The Apprentice* was the oppositional discourse that transpired between participants of a blog, instead of the program text. The blog gave people an arena with which to launch dialogue about business issues, whether they agreed or disagreed with *The Apprentice* episodes that had been broadcast. Lair (2007) also points out the overarching commercial and marketing aspect of the program:

Although *The Apprentice* never explicitly talks about itself on-air as a marketing vehicle, its marketing power nevertheless remains an inescapable subtext of the program. The program leads the way in the relatively new field of "branded entertainment," a hypercharged variety of product placement that seeks to carry advertising messages to audiences... (p. 244)

McGuigan's research revealed that *The Apprentice* performs an ideological role in the projection of the values of free-market business in a seductive manner (McGuigan, 2008, p. 309). It behooves Trump and his production associates to enforce the hegemony that corporate culture is cut throat; and as Trump had remarked, "It's brutal, it's tough, it's business." This added to the drama and interest in the program, as viewers tuned in to see just how brutal it could get.

The program also highlighted the expectations of the standards of beauty in business. The most glaring example was contestant Danny who became the poster boy of

“wrong.” Danny, a long-haired, hippie-type, had a free, artistic spirit, and dressed in polyester leisure suits, carried a guitar, and wrote impromptu songs. He was singled out and ridiculed by Trump from the beginning of the season. Trump believed that there was no room for unconventional and deemed it to be unprofessional. Indeed, after he was outed by Trump, Danny changed his style of dress to please Trump. Based on these assertions, the program discouraged Danny from expressing individuality through his appearance, and put pressure on Danny to conform. Danny fell in line with Trump’s dominance and conformed to Trump’s standard of business attire. This assertion is supported by Rafaeli and Pratt (1993) who state, “Homogeneity of dress indicates the value of minimizing individual differences within the organization” (p. 42). Lair asserts that this serves as a reminder to the importance of homogeneity in the corporate world, and conformity as a value in the discourse of *The Apprentice* (Lair, 2007, p. 176).

Another example of the expectation of the standards of beauty in business concerned subtext surrounding contestant Brent. As far as Brent’s case, Lair (2007) asserts that, given Brent’s appearance, it was not a surprise that he was marginalized by Trump and his teammates as he was short, overweight, wore glasses, and stood out against his fellow competitors (p. 168). Lair observes that the vast majority of RTV characters are of at the very least above-average in attractiveness (p. 168). Brent was also painted as being unstable through editing of the program.

Brent later complained in a confessional that Tammy did not allow him to give a presentation for a promotional billboard for a health cereal because he was fat. Later in the boardroom, Brent repeated this to Trump. Trump concurred with Tammy’s decision not to let Brent present. Trump argued that standards of attractiveness inevitably govern

business situations and remarked, “There’s nothing wrong with that, that’s the way life is” (Lair, 2007, p. 169). Lair asserts, “This served on the one hand to point to the troublesome consequences of dismissing people based on arbitrary standards of appearance, while simultaneously naturalizing those standards both as inevitable and as a barrier that those who cannot meet such standards” (p. 175). Perhaps Trump only allowed these people that were sub-par based on *The Apprentice* standards only to point out how important this fact is, as they were always marginalized for not fitting the mold of expectation.

Some business “truths” could be gleaned from the series. With business being brutal, the hegemony of winning, no matter what, was firmly in place as being the most important thing. Also, money is used as a central motivator (Lair, 2007, p. 226). One of the “Street Smart” contestants described dropping out of law school once she found out the amount of money to be made in that profession. She then made the decision to move to Los Angeles, to do something else that made more money than being an attorney. She remarked, “It is all about the money for me.”

While Trump did recognize talent in the business environment, he usually emphasized solid business school training, such as the Wharton School of Business, where he and his children attended. He usually noted the impressiveness of the formal education that each contestant had, except for the Street Smarts versus Book Smarts season, in which he gave kudos to those that hadn’t been formally trained or educated.

As in the real world, ethics are a gray, slippery slope as presented on *The Apprentice*. Indeed, at least in the final cut, Trump does give mixed messages of acceptability and at times omits chastising unethical or at best questionable behavior by

the contestants. In one such instance, Omarosa may have created the reason that contestant Kwame did not win *The Apprentice*, Season One, since she lied in the final task. Trump did not ever make mention of it. Also, when Kwame was presented as a basketball star, signing autographed balls at Planet Hollywood in Times Square, to spur sales of merchandise, Trump did not take him and some of his teammates to task for the obvious ruse (Kinnick & Parton, 2005). The women received mixed messages for their use of sexuality in the tasks. And in Season Three, Tara attempted to display a positive social message in the Sony task that took place in Harlem, for which she was chastised and fired. The message is clear when it comes to ethics: nothing is done to the detriment of business. Capitalism rules without serious questioning (McGuigan, 2008). Watching *The Apprentice* plays an unquestionably important role in the formation of an altered attitude towards big business (Tressler, 2006, p. 64).

Trump is positioned as authority/master/star throughout the series. Of course, this is based on Trump's legendary status and notoriety in the real estate industry, high profile properties, his books and educational ventures. Trump touts owning more than one hundred companies, and is presented as a benchmark for success. *The Apprentice* producers were able to build on that reputation even further and cash in on the construction of reality.

In Trump's ego-maniacal paradigm, his script was, "As the master, I want to pass along my knowledge to somebody else." Certainly, with the fact that Trump has five children, some of whom are grown, he has created his own dynasty of progeny to pass his knowledge to. Again, another fictional manufacturing. To feed Trump's ego even further, he was to identify a worthy person of *The Apprentice* role, and also make that person rich

and famous (McGuigan, 2008). Indeed, the implications of his signature phrase, “You’re Fired,” had severe consequences since it cast contestants into media purgatory and uncertainty as many of the contestants had quit their jobs to be a part of the competition.

It may also be pointed out that the program is purported to be an attempt for Trump to find an *Apprentice*. Trump has many outlets with which to gain quality employees and certainly does not need the program to do that for him or offer the venue for him to accomplish that goal. Lair cites that, “Trump does not need the program to find an *Apprentice*, but is using the program both as a promotional vehicle for his own interests and a money making operation in its own right” (Lair, 2007, p. 272).

Trump is presented as a starring celebrity, with adoring fans. At times, music was played as he descended the stairs, an instrumental fanfare with trumpets, signaling royalty as Trump descended stairs or escalators. Groups of screaming, adoring fans are shown as Trump exits buildings, or hosts a book signing. Trump, outside of Mann’s Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles, remarked to the contestants, “They should put my footprints outside; I am the biggest star of anybody. I have the number one show on television.”

While Trump is overly boastful on everything that he touts, lessons can be learned on the art of positive spin, as demonstrated by Trump himself. He is a consummate ring master, that can contribute to the study of public relations, and indeed he had participated as a guest speaker at the national PRSA conference in the past. At a group reward dinner, at which Trump was part of the reward, contestant Bryan asked Trump about a story that he had read that Trump had paid off a house mortgage for a couple that had stopped to help him with car trouble; Trump confirmed the story. Indeed, many of the contestants

admitted to having studied Trump extensively through previous seasons and his books. Many of them were “disciples” of his words of wisdom and business philosophies, spouting his philosophies at times, and other times actually comparing themselves to him, like “Trump Stepford followers” preprogrammed by his indoctrination into business.

Trump is King in this paradigm whether touting himself, his own or others products, or defining corporate business in America. His influence is undeniable in not only corporate America, but also in the art of self-promotion. He and the program both support the hegemony of capitalism, as money and power through business prowess, is the ultimate goal. *The Apprentice* demonstrates that it is a useful tool for living through consuming and may be used as a guide for living through its powerful messages contributing to reality television commerce.

Consumption and Trump’s American Dream

Controversies over the culture of consumption are significant. The consumer culture grows with the advancement of the sophistication of the U.S. capitalist system. The institutional structure of the consumer society continuously slants culture toward the realm of commodities, services and lifestyle (Cortese, 1999, p. 124). The institution of consumer culture supports the belief that wealth, power and beauty are desirable and accessible to all (Slater, 1997). It is an ever-growing relentless machine that continues to churn twenty four hours a day, three hundred sixty five days a year, resulting in a corruptive influence of product obsession and consumerism.

Companies make products, and companies need to sell products. Although companies exist to sell their products, does not mean that society needs their products. Therefore, in many cases, companies need to create an artificial “want” for the products

that they want to sell. This is where all of the intricacies of marketing and its advertising arm come into play.

Since companies with products to sell provide the monetary means for producing and distributing media programming, the power lies heavy in their hands. Therefore, the media has had a hand in both helping to create and maintain a consumer culture. When television became a viable medium, advertisers jumped on the bandwagon, creating full-on sponsorships of programs with their brands and products. In fact, broadcast television owes its entire existence to the company/product/advertiser/consumer machine.

Promotionalism and consumer culture are now a dominant cultural condition, with RTV programming at the forefront (Hearn, pp.166-167). And in the case of *The Apprentice*, it has played its part to contribute to consumerism among its viewers. Not only from direct brand/product placement and plot assimilation, but also through the social discourse in consumerism, the American Dream, and luxe living. Indeed, the entire series of *The Apprentice* may well be a manifesto for commentary about consuming and the way in which Americans should conduct their lives.

Foucault and Magritte (1983) argue that people can be falsely positioned within an established system of seeing what links reality to visual representation, or referents. *Magritte's Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (1926), "This is not a pipe," illustrates this idea of referents. Magritte's painting of a pipe, combined with the painted words "This is not a pipe," calls visual representations into question. What is painted on canvas is not actually a pipe, but a depiction of a pipe. This statement serves to point up the artifice of the conventional equivalency between "an actual pipe" and "the image of a pipe" (Foucault & Magritte, 1983). Again, not reality, just a social representation of reality.

Ouellette and Hay (2008) assert that pre-television modernists played upon the distinctions between the real and the created such as Margritte's pipe depiction. *The Apprentice* producers have created a paradigm of believability by presenting its own reality, linked to referents. While this is not a real depiction of business, it is presented as real and is such one representation of business, albeit disingenuous. It looks like business, feels like business, so it must be business. All of this is based on a weak foundation and manufactured business reality.

There is also the postmodern idea that presents Baudrillard's term, the "hyper-real." This can be used in an attempt to describe the mass mediated construction of the world and the glossy images that are presented, which have more meaning than the actual real thing. The attractiveness of constructed representations are far better. Eco (1990) and Baudrillard (1983) believe that Disney World is the epitome of this construct. The Main Street at Disney World's Magic Kingdom evokes nostalgia and harkens back to a simpler place in time in small town mid-America around the turn of the twentieth century. It is a perfectly scrubbed, fantasized and packaged version of something that never really existed. Disney's job is to make glossy, hyper-real representations of eras, complete with the appropriate glossy representations of places and things.

The Apprentice also presents this hyper-real. Images of clean, beautiful penthouse apartments, travel on a shining private airplane or helicopter, eating very expensive truffles flown in from Europe, etc. presents a hyper-real depiction of wealth and the American Dream. *The Apprentice* offers the contestants and viewers a myth of success and unlimited wealth in a meritocracy that is presented as open to everyone while glossing over the material realities of the contemporary U.S. economy where fewer and

fewer individuals control more and more of the nation's wealth (Duffy & Brennen, 2006, p. 17).

The song by the O'Jays (Gamble & Huff, 1974), *For the Love of Money*, sets the tone for *The Apprentice* RTV series and bears a striking consonance with the central "get rich" ethos of the program (Lair, 2007, p. 225):

Money, money, money, money, - money

Money, money, money, money, - money

Some people got to have it; Some people really need it

Listen to me y'all, do things, do things, do bad things with it

You wanna do things, do things, do things, good things with it

Talk about cash money, money; Talk about cash money

Dollar bills, y'all.

Although the song's message is a cautionary tale about money and casts a sinister shadow over the idea of wealth, nonetheless, is treated as a positive for the program. Along with this song, there are symbols of wealth that are shown as well. Some of the images include a Mercedes standing logo emblem on a black Mercedes car, Trump's jet, a stock market ticker board, and a dollar sign money clip filled with cash. All of these are symbols of Trump's world. With the promise of a six-figure salary for the winner of *The Apprentice*, Trump offers a short-cut, magical rise to a luxury lifestyle via *The Apprentice*. During a reward that was won by her team, contestant Andrea remarked that through this game, they are all "living the American dream."

In a contradiction, throughout the series, images of the Statue of Liberty are shown and the impression given is that if one works hard, endless possibilities can be

achieved. In fact, one episode of *The Apprentice* was wrapped around the story of Ellis Island as the contestants had to design a commemorative book to sell to tourists at Ellis Island. Some of the candidates spoke of their ancestors “coming over” with patriotic music swelling in the background. They spoke of their families seeking freedom and equal opportunity.

This is what Trump purports to offer, opportunity in a true head-to-head competition, that matches contestants on their levels of passion, business savvy, energy and ability. Images of the Statue of Liberty evoke the thought of immigrants coming to Ellis Island in pursuit of a better life. These people were poor, lived in substandard housing, and did their best to just get by with their wages earned in factories. All of this harkens to the fact that immigrants came to America seeking freedom, opportunity and equality.

Trump, who embraces wealth, must also embrace a stratified social and economic system. His lifestyle is indicative of one that has little interest in the subject of social equality in the United States. All of this points to inconsistencies between what Trump says and what he does, and the way he chooses to live. From time to time, Trump mentions the American Dream in his rhetoric in the series as he too believes that the game delivers opportunity for entrepreneurship and access to the American Dream. To shed further light, in a 2007 interview with Rose for *Forbes* magazine, Trump described the American Dream as, “The American Dream is freedom, prosperity, peace--and liberty and justice for all” (“The World’s Billionaires,” 2010, n.p.). In Trump’s book, *Think Like a Billionaire*, Trump presents himself as the archetype of the American Dream, writing, “With the parents I had and this country as my backbone, anything was possible. I

operated on that premise of possibility, and I'm walking, talking proof of the American Dream. For me the American Dream is not just a dream; it's a reality" (Trump & McIver, 2005, p. 135).

All of this is an unreal portrayal as the version of the American Dream that Trump refers to is the materialistic, self-interest pursuit of wealth (Fisher, 1973). And in fact, Cloud (1996) points out the American Dream actual acts opposite to what Trump promotes, legitimizing social inequality. Lair points out as social propaganda in Trump's definition of the entrepreneurial self, "That *The Apprentice*'s celebration of the entrepreneurial self is so thoroughly couched within the mythos of the American Dream makes its ideological influence all the more difficult to detect" (Lair, 2007, p. 260). Which only produces more of the manufactured reality that surrounds the series. Trump does not really offer unbridled opportunity, as Trump is only feathering his economic nest by "selling" the lives of the contestants, maximizing on the entertainment economy that prevails. However, the series does depict scenes where the contestants themselves speak of the poetic notion of Trump offering the dream. In Season Five, contestant Andrea remarks that all of the contestants are "living the American dream" with their experience with *The Apprentice* competition.

Jhally and Lewis (1992) make the observation that, "Although the American Dream wasn't invented for television, television appears to nourish and sustain it" (p. 73). Silverstein, Fiske and Butman (2005) also agree that, "The American Dream is not only alive and well as an aspiration, it has become the emblem of our identity, the physical expression of our heart and soul" (p. 76). Barthes (1957, 1972) and Fiske and Hartley (1978) have analyzed myths in semiotic terms, interpreting cultural myths as meaning-

making systems that help explain societal attitudes, behaviors and ideologies. One myth is that of the mythical and illusive American Dream. “If you work hard, so says the myth, you will reap the benefits of The American Dream” (Campbell, 1995, p. 16).

Not only does this dupe the contestants, but also deceives the viewers into potentially believing that following Trump’s advice and business tenets can actually offer a short-cut to true upward mobility. By believing this, Lair contends that *The Apprentice* can actually “act as equipment for living” for viewers (Lair, 2007, p. 218). This may lead to the potential influence of *The Apprentice* to actually tell its audience how to live. Furthermore Lair asserts, *The Apprentice* bases itself in the narrative myth of the American Dream. By doing so, this legitimizes its ideological message. *The Apprentice* presents an unattainable lifestyle for the vast majority of American families. It is impossible for most Americans to ever attain the type of lifestyle that Trump and *The Apprentice* tout and may create unrealistic expectations of American life and living. The lifestyle bar is set quite high for the general populace, and then is normalized within the messages as being reasonable to obtain. Americans are constantly on a quest to “trade up” to higher levels of quality, taste and aspiration (Silverstein et al., 2005). With constant images of Trump’s private jets, private helicopters, yachts, elaborate penthouse apartments, and other objects of luxury living, there is no doubt that *The Apprentice* sets the bar very high for acquiring goods, and thereby encouraging a “luxe” lifestyle. The Trump name alone, imbues opulence. When shots are shown of the luxurious, they are always accompanied by classical music orchestration, providing a rich audio backdrop.

The Apprentice uses the construct of luxury in every episode, along with the idealized images of wealth. True luxury items commonly included luxury cars, expensive

watches and jewelry, designer clothing, yachts and large residences such as urban mansions and country houses. *The Apprentice* regularly touts these luxury items, with Trump framed as the ultimate “luxacrat.” Trump takes the candidates to the suite area of Trump Tower and remarks, “You see why Trump is Trump. Everything is luxury; the best of everything.”

In most of the tasks in *The Apprentice*, Trump rewards the successful winners with opulence and luxury, whereby the losers are punished exiled from Trump’s opulent world. One of the contestants in Season Four remarked, “We are living it up Trump style.” In Season Two, Wes remarks during helicopter ride “gives you a taste of what it would be like to be Donald Trump; taste of greatness, taste of power.”

Some rewards included merchandise. In one episode, each team member received \$25,000 in merchandise from a private Bergdorf Goodman shopping spree, which was across the street from Trump Tower. In another reward, the winning team was given \$25,000 to spend on their choice of Mikimoto Pearls. In another, the winning team was given \$50,000 to spend on Graff diamond jewelry of their choice. In another, the winning team was taken to a secret Brinks vault, where each person was allowed to select \$30,000 worth of diamonds.

Some rewards were focused around a luxury experience. Trump provided a reward picnic at his in Bedford, New York, to which he remarked, is an area of the country where “the richest people live.” Another was a trip on Trump’s private jet to Florida to spend the day at his Mar Largo estate. Another reward was a trip with Trump to tour Manhattan via his private helicopter, and he remarked that they were “getting to experience the life of a millionaire.” Other winning contestants enjoyed a ride on the

beautiful yacht, *Calypso*. The camera shots included water and aerial shots of the yacht, in the bay skirting Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty, with orchestra music swelling in the background. The crew was in white uniforms, serving champagne, and exquisite hors d'oeuvres. As reward, the women take a limo to a private jet and have champagne to celebrate the win while being flown to Boston to an expensive restaurant. The women remarked "This is a taste of the Trump lifestyle."

Other rewards focused on unique experiences. Contestant Kendra was able to fly in a military jet in a mock aerial combat dogfight. Another reward included a trip to the Poconos Racetrack to race Lamborghinis. Another was a deep sea fishing trip with a lobster bake on the beach later that night, complete with champagne, a chef, and a bonfire. One winning team was able to board a 727 jet, *Zero G*, and got the opportunity to experience zero gravity. Another winning team had the opportunity to fly to Los Angeles to tour the DreamWorks Studios and perform a voiceover for one of their new animated films. Other unique experiences included sports. One winning team was able to play tennis with legendary John McEnroe and Anna Kournikova. One reward included a trip to Madison Square Garden to play with the New York Knicks, including star player Isaiah Thomas, and play baseball with the Mets at Shea Stadium.

Other rewards focused on getting to meet famous people. One winning team had a meet and greet with George Steinbrenner at Yankee Stadium. Another was a meeting with Rudy Giuliani, and another with Michael Bloomberg at the Governor's Mansion. Others included private meetings with Billy Joel, Burt Bacharach, Yclef John and Shania Twain. In the last season while shooting in Los Angeles, the winners were treated to a

private concert by Andrea Bocelli on Malibu beach with steak, lobster, drinks and fireworks.

Special food as reward was also given. One specific episode featured the contestants feasting on rare white truffles flown in from Italy expressly for the winners of that week's task. The truffles were valued at \$4,000 per pound. Another was a luxurious breakfast with George and Carolyn at the Rainbow Room on top of Rockefeller Center. A private dinner cruise on the Queen Mary II, complete with steak, lobster and champagne, served by waiters in white tails. A private dinner at the 21 Club in their \$4 million wine cellar and dinner at Spago with Wolfgang Puck. Expensive wine and champagne were usually featured at these luxury meals such as Moet, Cristal and Dom Perignon.

The producers used an interesting editing technique whereby not only was the luxurious meal experience shown, but also the juxtaposition of the losing team with their ordinary food. In one episode, the women won, and were flown to Boston on a private jet and have dinner at Olives restaurant. The losing men's team were shown in the kitchen eating bagged salad, eating burned food, and drinking beer. In another, Nick and Amy were shown having lunch by a beautiful pool, complete with caviar and champagne, while the losing team were shown eating cereal in the kitchen. In Season Six, while the winners were enjoying their gourmet dining experience with Trump, wife Melania, and Wolfgang Puck at Spago's, the losing team were shown eating camp food on paper plates in the dark outside in the backyard. For the Bocelli concert, the winning contestants were shown drinking hollowed out pineapple drinks with paper umbrellas, eating a sumptuous buffet with steak and lobster, while the losing team is shown cooking a pot of spaghetti with red sauce, eating in the backyard.

The message was clear in the series: You will be a luxacrat and enjoy exciting rewards if you are a winner, and Trump will be the judge of your performance. This had a profound impact on the contestants, as not only were they not rewarded, but also punished for being a losing team at a particular task. The message was clear to the audience as well as they witnessed the reward/punishment phases of *The Apprentice*. Viewers were also visually treated to Trump's "good life." This amounted to a fantastic world, only to be afforded by the wealthy, full of expensive housing, food, jewelry, cars, planes, celebrities and other influential people. Another message was clear: if you are a successful business person, all of this could be available to you. On an intellectual level, people understand that those types of opportunities to become a billionaire are rare for the majority of Americans. Trump taunts the viewers with the message that becoming a billionaire is accessible to all and reinforces that message with books such as *Trump: Think Like a Billionaire: Everything You Need to Know About Success, Real Estate, and Life*.

In most television programs, it would be difficult to identify an "author" (Allen, 1992, p. 9). However, in the case of *The Apprentice*, in the powerful grip of both Trump and Burnett, they are in effect, the authors of the program and provide the unifying vision behind the program. Their design of using *The Apprentice* as a commercial vehicle is written all over the series, analogous to an auteur in film. Television is a perfect vehicle for this type of scheme. Within the context of American commercial television, the principal aim of broadcasting is not to entertain, enlighten, or provide a public service; it is to make a profit (Allen, 1992, p. 17). The executive producers of the program, Trump

and Burnett, created a program that has been crafted to provide the perfect platform for promotion.

Its largest sole contribution has been in the area of brand/product placement and sponsorship. By actually wrapping the storyline around the brand/product placement, and thereby assimilating or fusing the two, the power of promotion was set. The contestants were shown talking about and using the sponsored products, resulting in an hour long commercial for the brand/product. This created a “3-D mapping” that effectively focused the viewers attention on the respective brand/product. The brand/product placement was also supported with spot advertisements that were borne out of separate deals that the sponsors made with the NBC network. Ancillary outlets were also used for bolstering the brand/product placement such as the Internet, or the inclusion of other corporations that had been brought on board to support the major sponsor of the episode. Companies utilized the series to assist with branding in the marketplace, to bolster existing ad campaigns, to increase their visibility, to roll-out new products and expand others, and, at times, simply to boost sagging sales.

The program not only helped build equity in the sponsored brands, but it effectively built equity in *The Apprentice* brand. *The Apprentice* board games and other merchandise was and still is available in the retail marketplace. Also, equity-building helped in the negotiation of future deals and with companies that were interested in co-opting the brand. Trump also had the opportunity to build equity in his own brand. The series also gave Trump the outlet to promote himself, his real estate holdings, and all of his retail product lines.

The Apprentice's marketing and promotional scheme, the sponsors' use of the program, Trump's use of the program as his own promotional vehicle, the presentation of *The Apprentice*'s American Dream through lux living, and business discourse exist in the text of the successful RTV program through images, Trump's words, and the contestants' words, being surrounded by luxury is the end product when one has a goal to become wealthy and powerful. Through great business prowess one can reach the heights of a luxurious lifestyle. However, without regard to ethics, as those are very secondary to the importance of serving business and its needs. Trump can also magically transform one's entire destiny with his golden, Midas touch, awarding the title of *The Apprentice*. Indeed, *The Apprentice* demonstrates that it may be a useful tool for living through consuming and may be used as a guide for living through its powerful messages. *The Apprentice* is propaganda in every sense, attempting to sway the viewers to believe Trump's tenets about life and business. This free entertainment comes at a price; that price may just be the hi-jacking of the belief system of its viewers.

CHAPTER IV

THE APPRENTICE AND SOCIAL DISCOURSE

In analyzing *The Apprentice* for manifest and latent televisual discourse, results show that the text is replete with evidence of underlying discourse that supports hegemonic stereotypes of gender, race, age and sexual preference. The text also contains discourse that demonstrates the need for RTV to manufacture salacious, provocative material and to engage in character creation. This chapter examines these issues. The process used to analyze *The Apprentice*, oppositional reading, deconstructs texts as discussed by Hall (1980) and illustrated by Campbell (1995), and is included to give a concrete example of *The Apprentice* in action. Hall also asserts that to deconstruct texts is to establish the difference between being “in language” (ideology) or “against language.” “In language” represents the dominant reading that supports the prevailing ideology, or “against language” that represents the negotiated reading or oppositional reading (Hall, 1992, pp. 161-162).

According to Boggs (1976) owners and managers of mass media use the respective media at hand “to perpetuate their power, wealth, and status [by popularizing] their own philosophy, culture, and morality. The owners and managers of media industries can produce and reproduce the content, inflections and tones of ideas favorable to them far more easily than other social groups because they manage key socializing institutions” (Lull, 2003, p. 62). This hegemonic control is evident within the text of *The Apprentice* as messages are derived that support the executive producers point of view. Hall adds to the discussion concerning mass-mediated hegemony by commenting, “But it is also possible (and useful) to think of this process in terms of a structure produced and

sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments-production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction” (Hall, 1992, p. 128).

Social representations are powerful statements especially when derived from a popular culture product such as an RTV product. The social messages run deep in both the manifest and latent content of the programs. These social messages move across many demographics including gender, race, sexual representations and stereotypes. The underlying current of thought that post-modern media products such as RTV elicit and, specifically, *The Apprentice*, contains the potential to influence viewer perception. As Hall points out, the power is not derived from the viewing of the televisual text, but the implementation of the ideas contained in the text; “Once the text has been distributed, the discourse must then be translated-transformed, again-into social practices if the circuit is to be both completed and effective” (Hall, 1992, p. 128). Social messages affect the portrayal of reality. In the arena of RTV, when the viewer encounters this, it has the potential to elicit the assumption of “truth in life.” It may present the truth, but not necessarily, as there are many types of manipulations that can taint the verisimilitude of RTV programs: “Texts do not express a meaning (which resides elsewhere) or ‘reflect reality’: they produce a representation of ‘the real’ which the viewer is positioned to take as a mirror reflection of the real world: this is the “productivity of the text” (Hall, 1992, p. 159). Hall also adds:

Before this message can have an “effect” (however defined), satisfy a “need” or be put to a “use,” it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which “have an effect,”

influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences (Hall, 1992, p. 130).

The editing process is a conscious effort to shape a particular media product and manufacture what is not naturally inherent. It is essential to keep in mind that the material that becomes the final edit of *The Apprentice* is the material that the producers want the viewers to see, and manipulate the images, sound, etc. to fit into a pre-determined vision for the program and its characters. In this way, the production's manipulation of the program and characters contain both manifest and latent messages. As the images roll for the viewing audience, what appears becomes "the truth" and bolsters social narratives; this may be internalized by viewers as fact. This can lead to *The Apprentice* becoming televisual discourse as "equipment for living" and being used as a life guide to lessons and expectations. This guide to living is presented in story form, which is essential to the process: "Events must become stories, and can only be signified within the aural-visual forms of the televisual discourse" (Hall, 1992, p. 128).

Gender Representations

In 1974, Tedesco noted that not only the number of women portrayed in 1950s and 1960s tended to be fewer than men, but also tended to be younger than men. Traditionally women were shown in a family role and less likely to be employed outside the home. Signorielli (1982) continued this work and found that television throughout the 1970s tended to be highly stereotypical in terms of gender roles. Women were likely to be cast in typical female roles and were likely to be young, attractive, married and portrayed within the context of home. In this way, as Maher (2004) notes, television texts act to "indoctrinate women into traditional gender roles" (Brancato, 2007, p. 49). All of

this affects the way in which society views the proper “roles” for women (Shanahan, Signorielli & Morgan, 2008).

Just as television reinforces, so does RTV play its part in the reinforcement of gender-specific behavior. Brown (2005) discusses this:

It is still possible to observe some apparently common themes emerging from the reality shows. Reality shows do a remarkable job of reflecting the social construction of gender within dominant culture. In that regard, no matter how contrived the story lines, the stereotypes of women on reality shows appear highly consistent with those seen in other aspects of popular media. These images arise from the decision of producers and editors about who will appear, and how they will appear. (p. 71)

Brown has analyzed the fact that RTV reinforcement of the social construction of gender-specific behavior is highlighted by images that are shown, all editing choices that are made, and all dialogue that is present in the text, both spoken and unspoken. *The Apprentice* reinforces common social narratives on gender, which in some cases reinforces stereotypes.

As discourse, most notably, the seasons that contain the most frequent and heavy-handed gender social narratives, are the seasons that separate the respective teams by gender; this include Season One, Two, and Four. Much of the gender narratives are discussed through the male contestants’ dialogue. Trump’s dialogue also supports this. The social narrative of male vibrato was present, along with a strong portrayal of women through that dialogue. Female contestant dialogue is largely unremarkable; however, in some cases, the women actually bolster the negative gender social narratives that are

advanced by the male contestants. Again, taking into account that only production-selected dialogue appears in the final edit of the program, the portrayals are shaped by the production team and producers.

One episode that exhibits latent social commentary about gender showed one of the female contestants smoking repeatedly throughout the season. The contestant, Heidi, is clearly exhibiting an unhealthy behavior, trying to cope with the stress of the program. Later in the season, she was shown crying and eventually leaving the show because her mother had been diagnosed with cancer. The message indicates that she is a fragile female. She was depicted as smoking in order to handle the stress of the competition, while crying about her mother and eventually quitting the competition. In sum, this may indicate a frail female that cannot handle the rigors of *The Apprentice* business competition.

This is also an indication that Heidi must forego her ambition as she must tend to a family obligation. This is very significant gender-typing as women in the workplace are usually depicted as having to choose between family and the work world. As noted previously, studies on the portrayal of women in television from the 1950s through to the first part of the century, have shown that while there have been some improvements in the depiction of women on television, stereotyped roles still abound and generally a woman is still portrayed as either having a family or a career (Tedesco, 1974; Signorielli, 1982; Signorielli & Kahlenberg, 2001).

Those types of images are on the heels of textual cues that indicate that women do not measure up to men in the work world. In another episode of the program, one camera shot deliberately displays a sexual, male-dominated and inappropriate image. The camera

cuts to a shot of the testicles of the famous bronze bull statue on Wall Street in Manhattan's Financial District. The bull is a powerful symbol of the tough business world, and there is no mistaking that the male bull is the victor in this world. The message here would seem to convey that the business and financial world is a tough, male dominated sphere.

In the beginning of the series, in Season One, both teams, the men and the women, hit the street to perform their prescribed task. The camera shows an unorganized cluster of young women arguing. It seems that the women cannot pull together to organize and begin their task. Once the women have some assemblage of purpose, the women are depicted as bumbling about on the streets of New York as they seemingly are experiencing logistical problems. This supports the stereotype of women not being able to work as a team. It is also commentary on the stereotype that women have an inability to navigate well, both of which are negative portrayals.

Through the social narratives, male vibrato was present in the series. The male contestants' prowess was expressed through dialogue. One way in which the men exhibited their prowess was through their discussion of business. Tough talk accented with obscenities conveyed the men's business prowess. Some of the male contestants from Season One were batting potential names around for the men's team name; one suggestion made was "BFB - Big Fucking Balls." A male contestant from the "Street Smarts" team of Season Three suggested the name of "Brass Balls Inc." for the team name and remarks, "You have to have big balls for business." That part of the male anatomy seemed to lend a common parallel with business prowess. Heavy vibrato was also present when some of the male contestants compared themselves to Trump,

attempting to draw parallels between themselves and Trump's perceived strength, business savvy and ideology. However, it is noted that the men that fared the best in the competition and were the most respected by teammates and Trump were those men that displayed their own individual identity and did not attempt to establish an unreal or inauthentic persona with empty male vibrato.

Many of the men no made qualms about how they felt about male superiority. In Season One, Nick remarks, "Women have been the result of a lot of men's downfalls." In Season Two, Wes remarked, "I toast to the men dominating the women." Much of the narrative of male prowess throughout the series was expressed in chauvinistic comments. One of the most flagrant examples of distasteful chauvinistic behavior in the series involved contestant Troy, in Season One. Troy made the sexist comment to a group of men that are at an art gallery viewing. He remarked, "Do you know what that picture is? Everybody wants a virgin outside of the bedroom, and a whore inside the bedroom." In response to his comment, the group of men chuckled, indicating an appreciation of Troy's comment. By far one of the worst quotes throughout the entire series. The sexist comment appeared and thereby approved for the final edit of the episode. Additionally, the episode was fret with sexual undertones and additional comments and actions from other male contestants.

Along with the talk of virgins, came the comments that included women as prostitutes. In an episode in Season One, another very unflattering comment was made by one of the men. Bill (winner of Season One) was upset by the women's team's actions. The task took place in Trump's Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino. Bill and his team deployed the idea to hire a model to assist VIP guests checking into the hotel. In a last minute

scramble to compete, the women's team sent their own female model to do the same. When Bill observed this he remarked, "The other team couldn't come up with an original idea so they have their hookers over here working my customers." His comment relays the message that in a competitive world between men and women, it is an approved behavior to engage in unappealing sexist dialogue against women that dare to compete against the men.

This message was also present in Trump's dialogue. In Season One, the men lost a task and they were scolded by Trump. Trump remarked, "As a man, I am disappointed in you guys. I'm starting to think that I may never hire a man again." This scolding was a result of the men's team losing to the women's team. The message here is that men should be the victor, especially over female counterparts. Later in Season One, he fired contestant Andy for not defending himself against two women on his team that verbally accosted him in the boardroom. Preceding Trump's usual "You're fired" dismissal, he remarked to Andy that, "The women killed you in the boardroom." Comments such as this reveal Trump's bias for support of the men contestants.

In another episode, involving one of the men's teams, the task was to shoot photos for a catalogue, which included hiring female models. The men would drift in and out of the area where the models were preparing for the photo shoot so they could ogle them, which presents a classic case of "male gaze" (Mulvey, 1975) as the women are there for the enjoyment of the men. One of the men that watched the models getting their hair done and makeup applied remarked, "We are up here in the pimp daddy suite." The male contestants were so enamored with the models that the task of the game became extremely secondary to them. In another episode in Season Three, the mixed gendered

teams meet with popular musical groups to set up events for each of the teams. The male members of one team decided that the women on their team should be a part of the negotiations with the musical groups: “The more girls, the better we will be. The hotter the chicks, the better.” John said, “Let me put my feather in my hat because it is time to pimp some girls.” At one of the meetings, the musical group expressed their favor of the women. John remarked to the band, “If that is what it takes, I will sell these women to you.” The women reacted by being humored by this comment. In the same episode, one of the men remarked that one of the women will get to “perform on Moby,” which is a lead singer of one of the groups. The comment did elicit laughter, even among the women candidates. With all of the negative sexual overtones directed at women in this particular season, ironically, it was the first time a female contestant won the coveted spot in *The Apprentice* series.

In Season Two, contestant Jennifer became an object of affection amongst the male candidates in that season. In an episode that centered around Levi jeans, the women decided that they would be the models for the shoot, rather than hiring out for models. Contestant Jennifer, a very attractive blonde female, walked out of the dressing area and onto the set for the photo shoot, camera-ready, with full hair and makeup. She was dressed in a tank top and tight jeans. All of the men on the team were focused on her and watched her perform for the camera. Then the dialogue turned to pornography. During the shoot, Jennifer took a picture with her butt facing the camera and contestant Kevin remarked that that was the “money shot,” which is a reference to a male orgasm scene in a pornographic film. In Season Three, via confessional, contestant John recounted what happened earlier in the task. He remarked “Stephanie was a fluffer,” which is a term that

refers to a crew member on a pornographic film crew, whose job consists of sexually arousing the male actors. In the same episode, Stephanie remarked that “John doesn’t respect women. He looks at us as a pretty face with no brains behind the face.” With this and other comments, John was painted as one of the male contestants that was the most chauvinistic.

Chauvinism was a topic that was brought up in conjunction with female contestant Erin in Season Three. In one episode, the teams had to develop a business concept designed to operate out of an Airstream travel trailer. Male contestant Michael suggested a massage parlor and wanted to name it, “Massage A-Go-Go,” borrowing the name from the famous Los Angeles bar, “Whiskey A-Go-Go.” Female contestant Erin did not like the name and remarked to Michael, he is a “pig A-Go-Go” and a “Chauvinist A-Go-Go.” Erin and Trump flirted throughout the entire season. At one point, as she was having an argument with a male team member in the boardroom, he remarked that since she was an attorney that specializes in discrimination cases involving women, she was accustomed to suing men and giving men a difficult time. It is interesting that he carried on and flirted with a female attorney that specialized in sexual harassment, and surprising that she continued it.

During one reward, he took the women out to his golf course. Still flirting with Erin he remarked, “You have a very delicate swing.” Clearly, some of her flirting bought her favor; however, in the end, her flirting did not save her from the chopping block. In her final boardroom scene, at one point Erin, still flirting with Trump, winked at him. Trump still fired her for doing a bad job with the task that had been assigned. The

message here is that although Trump flirted with her, this did not supersede his commitment to business. However, it does smack of irony and contradiction.

For the most part, the women contestants were fit, shapely and young on the program. Owing to the women's physical attributes, the men's teams suggested that the women had an advantage over them in some of the tasks. It was suggested by one of the men that they (the men) needed to "grow a set of boobies" so they wouldn't be outsold by the women. Kevin remarked that the other team, speaking of the women's team, may fair better at the task because "they are better looking than we are." The comment was also made that "men will buy anything from a pretty woman."

For Orbach (1998), it is within this unequal relationship between women and men, that women must learn to consider themselves as an item, a commodity and a sex object. In this paradigm, women need to pursue a perfect body, as beauty is currency. A woman's beauty leads to a promising life, in both love and wealth (Lee, 2009, p. 504). A woman's beauty therefore, is her fortune (Wolf, 1991). In this, a woman's professional position and earnings are also intertwined with their beauty (Lee, 2009, p. 504). This illustrates that the body is a necessary form of capital in order for women to achieve the American Dream of success (Heinricy, 2006, p. 155)

The men expressed other gendered stereotypes of the women as well. At one competition, the men lost and had to spend the evening in the suite. The women got ready for a night out at a nice restaurant as their reward for the earlier win. As they were leaving, male contestant Kwame made a snarky remark to the women, "Bye beauty queens." In another episode male contestant Alex remarked about female contestant Erin, "Erin looks like a cross between a Barbie doll, college girl slash Hooters waitress." These

types of comments underscore the men's preoccupation with the women's physical appearance and the stereotypes that surround attractive women.

Trump also often commented on the women's appearance. Trump made comments such as "The women are looking good," "I would like to see the women in bath robes," and "I am looking at these beautiful women in these crazy outfits, and they look pretty good." Trump commented about the selection of the final two contestants in Season One and his own sexism, "Everyone assumed I would be picking a beautiful woman like Amy, but hey I'm stuck with two guys." Trump also remarked to contestant Audrey that she was beautiful. When Trump fired her he remarked, "Well at least they can't say I picked the best looking one." These self-admitted comments indicate that Trump comes under some criticism for his potential choice of candidates; many people would assume that the well-known womanizing mogul would hire an attractive female for the position within his organization.

Despite their fit appearance, the contestants were not shown to have outlets for physical exercise. In order to maintain an ideal body weight and a high level of fitness, particularly for the cameras, the contestants would need the opportunity for physical fitness. Except for a basketball goal in the suite, no other sign of treadmill or any other cardio or exercise equipment was available. Providing this as a stress reliever for the contestants would have been both physically and mentally healthy as well. If in fact, there was no availability for exercise, the production team may not have provided this so as to add to the heightened stress level in the suite.

Just as the women contestants were attractive and fit, the standard held true for most of the male contestants as well. While there were no exceptions in the groups of

female contestants throughout six seasons of *The Apprentice*, some exceptions did exist for the male contestants. Bowie, Brian, and Brent were all overweight male contestants, and all of them were fired in the course of the game. This message conveys that those that did not measure up to the standard would not be allowed to participate in the competitive business world, losing the opportunity to be the *Apprentice*, losing the access to power and wealth, and all of the ancillary benefits that were inherently attached to the position. Those with less than fit body types were penalized, locked out of the competition, exiled and sent packing.

Provocative Topics

There is a preoccupation with salacious topics and behaviors. Not all profanity is edited out of the program. Profane language is often used by the candidates with the censored “bleep” added in order for the program to pass censorship guidelines. It is quite apparent as to what the omitted word is since one can still read the lips of the contestants and the context as to which it was used. While the male contestants are depicted using profanity, the camera seems to favor the females use of profanity, using every opportunity to let the viewing audience in on every salacious word. Some is used to express the level of frustration of the candidates as they are put through the paces of the tasks. Some of the profanity is used against fellow candidates, and other times used when simply socializing. The effect of this is to punctuate the drama, punctuate the tough business atmosphere of *The Apprentice*, and reminds the audience that the candidates and their actions are “real” to help the audience to relate to the cast.

Some nudity is also present in the footage. Of course, the footage must pass the network censors, so the nudity is mild or in some cases, implied. However, it is important

to remember that the mild nudity is selected for the final edit of the program. The camera catches the contestants in various states of dress, including the women in their bra and underwear. The bathroom space in the suite is co-ed. Both the women and men are shown going in and out of the bathroom area, many times draped only in towels. However, the men are rarely shown in their underwear, and when shown, they are in boxer-type underwear that offers a higher degree of coverage than traditional underwear.

At times, the camera shows footage that is inappropriate. In one episode, contestants Charmaine and Leslie were having a conversation about some of their teammates, and the two went into a women's restroom. Surprisingly, the camera followed them into the restroom. As they continued their conversation, the camera shot their legs under the door of the bathroom stalls, with their pants down around their ankles. Following the women into the restroom, while inappropriate, was another attempt at punctuating "realism."

The program did show a preoccupation with sex as well. Throughout the six seasons of the program it is found to be replete with sexual innuendo and sexual language. Occasionally, Trump would overtly discuss sex. He made comments such as "There is sex in the boardroom. It exists." Another comment he made was, "Sex is always good." He would not only discuss sex, but on occasion would press for details from the contestants. One of the male candidates, Adam, was sexually inexperienced. Trump asked a very uncomfortable Adam if he had had sex before. Adam told Trump he is not comfortable answering that question. Trump continued to press Adam about sex and a previous task: "Don't you think it was risky to delve into a topic that you don't know much about?" Later he remarks to Adam that one day he will actually be

comfortable with the topic of sex. Trump remarks, “It has gotten me into a lot of trouble Adam. It has cost me a lot of money. There is nothing like it though.” Adam still reacted with discomfort with the topic as Trump continues with the subject.

As part of the sexual social dialogue in the program, some of the contestants began romantic relationships. In reality programming this is termed as a “showmance.” The first showmance couple was Nick and Amy in Season One. This was followed by Sean and Tammy in Season Five, and Tim and Nicole in Season Six. Trump often pressed the contestants for details about their showmance. At times production would also get involved to assist in helping the showmance blossom or result in sexual activity. One example of this is Nick and Amy were placed in adjoining rooms at Trump’s Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino, during a task. The couple did not take advantage of this and remained in their respective rooms.

Of course, the showmance makes for great RTV content. In one episode, Trump commented to contestant Amy, while in the boardroom, that she could have brought in her “boyfriend” (speaking about Nick). Most of the time, the candidates were not very forthcoming about information concerning their respective showmance, which is the reason Trump would press them for information. Bill Ransic, winner of Season One, also entered the fray with Nick and Amy’s showmance. Bill encouraged Nick to use the private jet on an upcoming reward as a “bedroom” as Amy would also be there and he should “put it to use.” He continued to encourage Nick, “You have this beautiful girl all on you, and you’re not doing anything, they are going to think you are a little ‘sweet,’ not that there is anything wrong with that.” Intimating that if he did not act in this sexual

way, that he was not a heterosexual man and he would miss the opportunity to obtain sexual favor from Amy.

The next showmance was between Season Five Sean (winner of Season Five) and Tammy. In one scene, Tammy tries to find her earrings when Sean remarks that she had left them in his bed, at which she smiles. Sean admitted to Trump's grown children and boardroom assistants, Don and Ivanka, that he had a crush on Tammy and intended to continue the relationship after the show had wrapped on production. At the live finale, Trump pressed Sean for information about his love for Tammy and whether or not he would want to pursue marriage with her. Surprisingly, Sean affirmed on live television that he could marry Tammy.

The last showmance was between Season Six Tim and Nicole. Trump finds out about the showmance, presumably from production, and questions the couple, prying for details. The couple acted coy and uncomfortable about Trump's line of questioning, which he finally abandons. In one episode, Nicole hurt her foot while surfing. Needing medical care, Tim accompanies her to the emergency room. Later that evening, minus the other contestants seemingly left alone in the pool, they engaged in a make-out session in front of the cameras. In a later episode, Trump asked Nicole for more details of the showmance. She did not oblige and acted uncomfortable. Later, Trump fired Tim for siding with Nicole, which displayed team disloyalty, in Trump's view, and allowing himself to be distracted by Nicole. Trump remarked, "Now it is OK for you to be kissing your little Nicole." Trump's commentary extended the nature of the extent of the showmances to the viewers.

While the female candidates of the first and the second season used their sexual prowess to win certain tasks, it was not surprising that some of the women were involved in post-show lingerie layouts. Four of the women from Season One did a seven page lingerie layout for the May 2004 issue of FHM men's magazine (see Appendix E). The shoot was photographed at the World Bar in New York City's Trump World Tower, which is the building that *The Apprentice* was shot. The publication featured a group shot and provocative individual shots with the women in black lingerie. Reportedly, the women were offered two-hundred-fifty thousand dollars to pose nude for Playboy magazine, but the women chose to be photographed by FHM wearing lingerie, for no monetary compensation.

In an interview discussing the layout, contestant Katrina Campins stated, "A woman that claims she doesn't use her sex appeal to sell, simply hasn't learned how to use it to her advantage." Katrina was criticized by other female contestants for her use of sex to sell. Contestant Amy remarked, "Katrina has a tendency to use her sexuality as her prime negotiating tactic. Turn off the sexual bullshit and let's talk business." Campins went on to appear in other magazines, including a lingerie shoot for Maxim Online.

Later in 2004, the women of Season Two did a lingerie layout for Maxim's online website (see Appendix F). The post-show contestants were clad in black lingerie, and were extremely sexually suggestive. In an interview with Stacie J, one of the participants in the photo shoot, on the Maxim Online website she remarked, "In business you need to walk a fine line: You use your sex appeal just enough to tempt a man. Let the man think there's a possibility, but then pull back. It should always be used in business." This is a

negative admission, however, not surprising since this comment was made to the Maxim men's magazine.

In the Maxim website layout, the women not only had a group shot, but also photos that paired the women up with one another. In the strong visual erotic poses, the women were strategically touching one another's bodies, inviting the male gaze, and invoking the fantasy of lesbianism. "Twinning," which describes a photographic technique that poses females in an identical way for a photograph and invokes another facet of lesbianism, is presented in the layout for the male gaze. In this phenomenon, two women are set with one another, generally the same clothing, possibly similar hair color and hairstyle. There is also evidence of twinning in one episode, as two of the fit, attractive, blonde women dress identical in tight red tank tops and tight, white jeans. The women take to the streets to peddle chocolate bars. The final edit shows the two flirting with men to sell their bars to win the task.

Some of the women embarked on a calendar for charity, entitled, *The Apprincess: Fired Up and Giving Back*. The calendar featured the women in skimpy outfits and were satirical images evoked by their respective *Apprentice* tasks ("Fired Apprentice Women," 2005). Proceeds from the calendar were set to benefit Hurricane Katrina victims through the non-profit organization Jackets for Jobs. The photos of the women were shot at the Playboy Studios in Los Angeles, by Playboy photographer, Steve Wayda. The contestants photographed for the calendar project were Maria Boren (Season Two), Jennifer Crisafulli (Season Two), Sandy Ferreira (Season Two), Elizabeth Jarosz (Season Two), Tara Dowdell (Season Three), and Erin Elmore (Season Three), Kirsten Kirchner

(Season Three), and Stephanie Myers (Season Three). While this was a positive move for charity, it provided negative commentary on the women of *The Apprentice*.

At times, the female contestants themselves propelled a negative female view. Contestant Ivana did not like Jennifer and took aim against her. Ivana resented the attention that the male contestants gave to Jennifer. Ivana remarked that the guys had fallen prey to her “hypnotic fembot spell,” to that which she cupped her own breasts, acting like they were guns, and pretended to shoot with them, adding oral shooting sound effects. This is a reference to the attractive, vixen, female robots in the *Austin Powers* (1997, New Line Cinema) film. This was interesting since Ivana herself used sex to advance her game play, such as the incident that she pulled her skirt down to sell a chocolate bar. Additionally, in another episode, she remarked about a reward that she participated in to that involved driving high performance vehicles on a closed race track. After the reward, in a sexually charged comment she remarked, “It is almost like having sex.” At times, the female contestants on many seasons of *The Apprentice* found it difficult to pull together and work with one another and not sabotage each other.

For a woman to work for Trump, he must deem her to be tough. So is Trump’s representation of one of his boardroom assistants, and manager of one of his golf courses, Carolyn Kepcher, which he characterizes as a tough, hard-nosed woman. He remarked in Season One, “Carolyn is a killer; she has left many men in her wake.” Lair (2007) observed that Carolyn occupies a duality that cannot be reconciled. Trump characterized and positioned Carolyn as being a shrewd, ruthless business women, but also positioned as a gendered role model of corporate femininity (Lair, 2007, p. 193-196). While Carolyn took a hard line with many of the male contestants and their actions, her biggest

statement throughout the seasons involved the highly sexually charged Season One female cast. She chastised the women for not getting along with one another, and using sex to advance in the tasks.

On occasion when the tasks included models, the camera showed the female models, backs to the camera, with no shirt or other various states of dress. In one episode, male models were brought into the task. Ivanka Trump, Donald Trump's adult daughter, arrives at the task as a judge, and one of the male models asks her if she wants to take off her shirt and help them lure in customers. She was good-natured about the comment, smiled and said, "Maybe next time." This was quite surprising that this scene was in the final edit, as this was a very inappropriate comment, and quite disrespectful to Trump's daughter. The mere fact that it was allowed in the final episode, points to the inappropriate comment to illicit a reaction from the viewing audience.

The Apprentice questionnaire contains a section that asks for the prospective contestants clothing and shoe sizes (see Appendix G). This indicates that perhaps the production team may provide all or some of the clothing for the contestants. When the female contestants dress provocative in a particular episode, this raises the questions of whether the clothing choice was the production team's choice, or the contestants choice. In fact production is controlling this, which is highly plausible, then the use of clothing could be used as a tool to craft a particular tone or portrayal of certain contestants.

To continue the theme of sex in the series, Trump remarked, "When I think of Los Angeles, I think of movies, I think of cars, I think of sex." This set the stage for objectification of females beginning with the Season Six opening sequence of the program shot in Los Angeles. As the opening sequence began, a butt shot of a female

rollerblader with very short shorts, with the word “Hollywood” placed across the back, was included. In the most flagrant of the objectification in the series, one of the rewards was a trip to the Playboy Mansion for a meet and greet with Hugh Hefner and his girlfriends, Bridget, Holly and Kendra. Beautiful, scantily-clad women were lounging around the property. Trump later arrived by limousine to the Playboy Mansion. The women on the team seemed uncomfortable with the reward, but they were able to have a business fireside chat with Hefner. At every opportunity, the camera would pan and zoom in on Playboy Bunny playmates, and their chests, usually bikini-clad.

Some of the women contestants are portrayed as villains. The female contestant that has been painted as the most evil villain is Omarosa. Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth is an African American political consultant by trade. However, in her second occupation, she presents a goldmine of drama for Trump as he has utilized Omarosa for several RTV programs. She is very dramatic and creates great fodder for RTV programming. Viewers love to hate Omarosa. Women with excessive emotional display tend to feature prominently in RTV and is akin to the “money shot” in film pornography (Grindstaff, 2002; Dubrofsky 2009). According to producers of talk shows, the more volatile a contestant is, the more “real” they are to the viewers.(Grindstaff, 2002, p. 19-20). While Omarosa is characterized as a villain, Trump considers her a tough female. This trait is important to Trump. He will fire the women contestants for appearing weak. In one episode, female contestant Jessie endures nasty comments from Omarosa in the boardroom. Trump fired Jessie for not standing up for herself against Omarosa.

Omarosa had a confrontation with contestant Erika about a supposed racist comment that she made. The program depicted a gender-typed “catfight” and allowed the

argument to be shown in the final edited version of the program. Omarosa was not only fighting with Ereka, but also contestant Katrina was shown to have difficulty with Omarosa. In one episode, Katrina told Omarosa, “Life is too short to be a bitch.” An interview with Katrina revealed some insight into the conflict:

Before my confrontation with Omarosa, I heard she had pushed a cameraman.

That's another reason I was furious with her -- I was very close with production. If you're sick of the cameras, don't sign up for a reality television show. People were accusing me of being violent with her? That's because they didn't see her push the cameraman two seconds earlier (“Donald’s Darlings,” 2004).

The production team allowed all of the drama to play out with Omarosa and the other female contestants in Season One.

Female contestant Erin from Season Three was a former beauty queen. Even though other contestants accused her of being an “airhead,” the producers did not frame her character in that way. However, they took advantage of the beauty queen moniker for an episode that portrayed her as being too feminine to understand anything about Home Depot. Erin remarks during the Home Depot task-centered episode, “As a former beauty queen, I know what a crown is – but I don’t know what crown molding is.” The producers took advantage of her background as a beauty queen to frame her femininity, and not in a positive light.

As mentioned previously, the sexuality that the women of Season One display is quite significant. Exposing their bodies was one tactic that they utilized their sexuality to sell. In one task, in order to boost sales for their lemonade booth, the women offered kisses with the purchase of lemonade. In one competition, contestant Ereka suggested

that they all tie up their shirts, to expose their thin, fit abdominal areas. In another episode of Season One, contestant Christy pulled up her shirt to expose her stomach to show the fish monger just “how hungry she was.” This was an attempt to negotiate a lower price on fish for a type of scavenger price hunt for the task. By letting the monger take a peek at her bare stomach, the women thought that perhaps they could negotiate a lower price with the man.

One episode required the teams to devise an advertising campaign for the company NetJets. In an overt move to use sexuality in the campaign, the women made ads that were extremely sexual in nature, the most overt of which contained a photograph used for the ad taken from a vantage point that made the jet look like a phallic symbol. Donny Deutsch, owner of the Deutsch Advertising Agency, was the primary judge in Trump’s absence for the task. After the women’s presentation, Deutsch remarked, “You all have set the women’s movement back.” However, ultimately, the women were rewarded for their tactics, winning the task, since Deutsch felt that although sexual in nature, the women thought big about their concept.

Another task involved boosting sales at the Planet Hollywood in Times Square. The women chose a strategy of being “Planet Hollywood Shooter Girls,” inspired by Hooters girls from the Hooters Restaurant chain, known for their skimpy outfits. As the women distributed Planet Hollywood t-shirts, most of them exclaimed, “I need extra small” which is a reference to the fact that they needed to wear extra tight t-shirts to show off their bodies. The women donned the shirts and tied them into a knot to make them tighter and show off their bellies. In addition, the women wore high heeled black boots and short skirts. They went to the bar and began selling shots to the customers. At one

point during the task, a male customer bought a tray of shots from the them, but wanted them to partake in the shots with him; they obliged. The women not only flaunted their bodies, but also their lack of ethics in using their sexuality to sell, and the use of alcohol to make the sale. In a later task, female contestant Ivana told a male customer that she would drop her skirt if he bought a chocolate bar from her for twenty dollars. The man agreed and she dropped her skirt for him, and the camera revealed a bikini underneath.

As mentioned earlier, Carolyn very much disapproved of the women's use of sex to sell, and eventually called them on it and reprimanded them for using their sexuality to sell. In her book (Kepcher, 2004), she wrote about the women using these tactics on multiple occasions:

As a woman, a working woman, and a corporate executive who has risen to a fairly high place in both an organization largely dominated by men and an industry dominated by men, I felt troubled and ashamed by the dubious means by which the women of Protégé were racking up their string of victories. By the fourth episode when Protégé won yet again, the little slack I had been willing to cut the women for what appeared to have begun as an amusing gimmick was gone. Frankly, I was appalled. The reason for my discomfort was simple: The women of Protégé, with batting eyes wide open, were using their sexuality to manipulate sales. (p. 164)

Later, as a reward for the win, the team was invited to Trump's golf course. Trump warned the women about their use of sexual proclivity to win the tasks. Of course, this smacks of irony since Trump encourages sexuality among the female contestants and he himself is highly sexual at times in the series. Trump warned the women, "You are smart,

attractive, and dynamic women. You beat the guys fair and square, but you are coming a little close to crossing the line by relying on your sexuality to win. Well it is unnecessary.” This feels very contrived from Trump since he tends to show the actions of a womanizer. This action may have occurred to appease any negative backlash from women viewers in the audience.

Later, contestant Ivana remarks that male contestant Bradford wanted the females on the team to “whore” it up in short skirts and halter tops, which he admitted to. Ivana remarked that she didn’t want to play the “sex card” and “would rather lose than resort to that.” Depending on the episode, Ivana conveniently reversed her stance on using sexuality in the tasks, as evidenced with her previously dropping her skirt in an attempt to sell a chocolate bar.

Another sexuality-laden episode involves the Dove Moisture Wash episode. Male models were brought in to audition for the team’s commercial that they needed to produce. Female contestant Erin not only flirted with the male models, but also made remarks such as, “Wow look at those abs.” Erin asked the male model to pull down his pants down a bit so as to expose more of his abdominal area. At the actual commercial shoot, Erin appointed herself as the female “wash” person that was to soap up the model’s stomach area. As she washes the model’s abdominals, she gazes dreamily at him, and remarks, “This looks like low budget adult entertainment. We have to cut this scene.” Besides Erin’s actions, the other team approved the commercial to deal with sexual content. A female chef is shown washing cucumbers, very seductively, and flirting with a male kitchen employee. In the boardroom, Carolyn chastised the team, this time both men and women, for their appalling use of sexuality.

Race and Cultural Representations

While there was some ethnic and cultural diversity, but the overwhelming majority of the contestants that appeared in the six seasons were White Americans. Approximately, one fourth of the one hundred contestants were non-White or of a diverse ethnic or cultural type. The only winner of *The Apprentice* that was ethnically diverse was Randall Pinkett, a Black contestant in Season Four. Sean Yazbeck was the only non-American winner. Yazbeck is British, with a diverse cultural background that arose from an Irish mother and Lebanese father. Some of the contestants may have had a multiple-ethnic heritage, but the information that was gathered only reflect those contestants that racial diversity was obvious or if the contestants themselves discussed their ethnic background within the context of the series.

Most seasons began with eighteen contestants. The results of the racial and cultural mix of the contestants for the six seasons are as follows:

Season 1: One Black man, one Black woman, one Asian woman; thirteen White American contestants

Season 2: One Black man, one Black woman, one Asian woman; fifteen White American contestants

Season 3: One Black man, and two Black women; fifteen White American contestants

Season 4: One Black man, one Black woman, one Hispanic woman, one Indian woman, one Russian woman; thirteen White American contestants

Season 5: One Black man, one Black woman, one Hispanic man, one Filipino woman, one Russian man, one British man; thirteen White American contestants

Season 6: Two Black men, one Indian man, one Jamaican woman, one Asian man; thirteen White American contestants

Season Five clearly contained the most racial and cultural diversity, with Season Four and Six as close seconds. The series was fully developed by Season Four and was cemented into significance among RTV programming and had become a major player in the world of brand/product placement and sponsorship. This constituted a good public relations tactic to add some amount of diversity, to stave off any critics that may have alleged that the show did not cast diverse contestants.

All too often, a lack of diversity leads to use of stereotyping. With little ethnic diversity within an audience, the use of stereotyping can be met with little resistance to the discourse that is present within the program. This creates little to no backlash against the program. This circular construct of producing content for a mostly White audience allows the program to hammer its commercial messages to the audience with little to no backlash against the sponsors involved.

The use of stereotyping, marginalizes groups is a shorthand language that offers an affirmation to commonly held mainstream beliefs. The strength of racial portrayals in combination with the guise of reality, makes the images more “real” and salient than other portrayals of ethnicity (Orbe, 1998, 2008). There was both a manifest and latent tone that suggested the presence of racial stereotyping in *The Apprentice* series. One contestant that was used in the stereotyping scheme of the series involved Craig Williams. Some of the stereotypes included Craig, a Black contestant that had a successful shoeshine business. With the thousands of Black males that would have applied for *The Apprentice*, casting a Black shoeshine businessman appealed to the

dramatic factor of the program. Scholars such as Andrejevic and Colby (2006) believe that RTV reinforces existing racialized mass-mediated caricatures. Craig was reduced to a caricature many times in the program. To be clear, Craig was a successful Black man with a vision stemming from a noble profession, but the image is quite stereotypical.

Craig's afro hairstyle became a part of stereotyping of Blacks in one of the scenes. In an episode that resulted in a win for Craig's team, the contestants were taken to a diamond vault. Two pageant winners accompanied the winning team. One of the pageant winners picked up a diamond crown to place on Craig's afro hairstyle. She remarked, "I think it would look best in your hair." The two proceeded to place the crown, with obvious difficulty, and remarked while laughing, "It is getting lost in his hair." On another task set in Harlem, Craig started speaking with a "hip-hop" flair for emphasis, which he hadn't displayed that manner of speaking prior to the Harlem graffiti task. The production team took full advantage of Craig's ethnicity, using it as caricature, and in fact, was probably the reason he was cast for *The Apprentice*.

By using supporting discourse in this circular construct, the series easily sells its narrow view of racial diversity, marginalizing it as well. Portraying ethnic representations in this way can lead to commodification of certain ethnic groups. This becomes another paradigm with which to frame the program and its contestants. This can create a commodification of packaging the identity of "Otherness." The series has co-opted the racial identities to form a package of "reality" to sell to audiences. According to bell hooks (1992), this "cultural commodification" acts as a way to sell marginalized group representations to the dominant culture (p. 21). The ethnic representations take on meaning within a larger televisual experience, as the audience consumes images and

portrayals of race. This package of reality is used for marketing, not as a positive agent of change for marginalized groups. Hooks claims that modern depictions of the Other have been transformed through a consumer culture that seeks to profit off of perceived difference. “Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream White culture” (Al-Bulushi, 2003, n.p.).

There were ethnic-based comments throughout the series. Black contestant Kevin remarked that he felt like Lucille Ball when the team went to the Mars candy facility to make chocolate bars. Fellow White, male contestant Kelly retorted, “Only darker and bigger.” Contestants Pamela and Chris (both White) had a conversation about NBA player Chris Webber. Pamela asked what Webber looked like since contestant Chris had the opportunity to meet him. Chris remarked, “Tall, Black guy,” to which both of them laughed. These comments only highlighted the stereotypical discourse in *The Apprentice*.

In the Planet Hollywood episode, the men’s team pretended that Kwame Jackson, a Black, male contestant, was a famous sports star in order to sell Planet Hollywood merchandise. He signed Planet Hollywood basketballs with his autograph. Most people bought the balls with the signature because they believed that he was a basketball star. When contestant Bill Ransic found out about the ruse, he witnessed Kwame in action with a youngster purchasing one of his autographed balls. Bill was upset at the unethical tactic that the men had used. In his defense, Kwame remarked, “I didn’t sell the kid crack.” More inappropriate, stereotyping dialogue was an underlying factor in the episode.

As mentioned earlier, Randall Pinkett was the only Black person to win *The Apprentice*. At the finale, the final two included Randall and Rebecca Jarvis, a White

female. In an odd gesture, after Trump awarded Randall the position, Trump asked Randall if he was interested in sharing his title with Rebecca. He quickly answered “No.” The audience booed at his abrupt answer, which definitely did not make him look favorable, especially since Rebecca was a popular woman candidate. Randall should not have been put into such a position to answer that question publically. It is image-affecting moments such as this that can cause harm to RTV candidates. Once the program ends, the editing forever speaks for the character of the candidates. The characterization of every person is frozen in television time. Trump at no other time asked for the winning Apprentice to share the coveted title.

In one of the most outrageous racial examples in the series, female contestants Omarosa (Black) and Erika (White), had a storyline that pitted the two against one another. The two bickered frequently, but the powder keg that caused the uproar was Omarosa’s accusation that Erika was a racist and that she had used a racial slur. During an argument, Erika sarcastically told Omarosa, “That is the pot calling the kettle black.” Omarosa immediately accused her of using the racial slur, but Erika dismissed her claim. Clearly, this was not a racial slur, but production decided to make it a glaring part of the drama of the episode. Omarosa was clearly shown as acting in a ridiculous manner, appeared overly sensitive, and paranoid. This segment was included in the episode since it heightened the characterization of Omarosa and added to the drama factor, fueled by differences in race. This effectively pointed to racial sensitivity and added a salacious race-card-driven-drama to the episode.

This also speaks to representations of Black women on RTV. Boylorn (2008) cites that these types of negative representations of Black women are especially harmful

because Black women are often assumed to represent their entire race and gender through their personal choices and actions (Boylorn, 2008; Brooks & Hebert, 2006; Collins, 2000, 2004; Cosby, 1994; Fuller, 2001; hooks, 1992) Boylorn also points out that Black representation on RTV has emerged as a quick claim to fame and the more outrageous and memorable, the better (p. 424). Clearly, Omarosa was a negative representation of Black women, and extremely outrageous and quite memorable due to her antics. This is precisely the reason that Trump used her for other RTV projects.

Throughout the series, Black, urban stereotyping was also present. One of the male candidate remarked that Raj's (White, male contestant) bow tie is "P-I-M-P." White, female contestant Erin lamented the fact that her team lost at a task and she remarked about the reward, "It would have been nice to get blinged out with Mikimoto pearls." One of the rewards was a chance to meet famous rapper Snoop Dogg and create a song with him. Snoop Dogg is renowned for his smoking marijuana and luxury lifestyle. At one time, Snoop also had a reality series that showcased he and his family. Another team meeting with rapper Fat Joe, resulted in him remarking, "You have to drink Cristal," and contestant Erin remarked, "Cris-tal is poppin'." Cristal was making reference to a very expensive champagne brand that is often named in lyrics of rap songs.

One of the tasks was set in Harlem and involved both the teams spray-painting murals to introduce the roll-out of a new game for Sony Playstation, *Grand Turismo*. One of the White men on the task, Alex, remarked about the task, "What the hell do I know about G wheels," and "C'mon how you doin'," as he attempted to use a Black, urban accent. During the task he went out on the street of Harlem and brought some young, Black men back to the mural site to give some feedback. Alex remarks to the camera,

“OK, so mad props and bling-bling it is.” The Harlem outdoor mural task extended into the night. Alex remarked, “I’m in Harlem at night with a bunch of White kids.” The next day after the painted mural was finished, Trump arrived in his black limousine as a rap song played in the background with a chorus that repeats, “it’s all good in the hood.” The fact that Sony and the producers allowed this episode to be produced in the low-income neighborhood of Harlem, shows a complete lack of sensitivity by not only Sony, but also the producers of *The Apprentice*. Once again, the point is driven that the message is about commerce and money, not social responsibility. In fact, Tara was fired for trying to impart a social message into the Sony Harlem task. Trump remarked that her social responsibility did not serve the client, the Sony corporation.

Tana, a White, female contestant, tried to speak urban street slang during an on-air auction task. One of the people assigned to assist her with the auction remarked on Tana’s urban slang, “She is like straight out of Compton with that talk,” making reference to a low-income suburb of Los Angeles, known for gang violence. Tana continued this manner of speech throughout the episode. Tana, on the winning team for the task, was able to meet a famous rapper, Lil John. Tana continued trying to “talk street” to Lil Jon with phrases such as “Bling bling,” and “We be talkin.” Carolyn, Trump’s assistant, did not take issue with Tana’s behavior in the boardroom. In fact, in confessional style, Carolyn talked on camera and was completely humored by Tana’s antics. Carolyn’s sensibility was disturbed by the women using their sexual prowess as part of the tasks, but she had no problem with a White woman attempting to speak urban slang.

There were several allusions to Trump and urban stereotyping. When Kwame was in the Trump Taj Mahal suite in Atlantic City, he remarked, “It is a pimped out, rap

video.” Kendra, winner of Season Three, was able to go to Trump’s suite for a reward. She remarked, “Trump’s pad is bling-bling. Trump must have been a rapper in a former life because I have never seen as much gold trim in my entire life.” The term “bling” makes reference to diamonds, gold, etc. with the term being born out of the urban, Gansta-rap, hip-hop scene.

Another episode displayed another negative stereotyping, that of marijuana use by the Black community. In one episode, two Black men ran a screen print shop. One of the teams used them to have t-shirts printed. The men had pictures of Bob Marley around their shop and they wore t-shirts that had symbolism that made allusions to smoking marijuana. They were characterized as being shiftless, not delivering the goods as promised, undependable, and, in general, doing a bad job on the printing.

While religion plays a large part of many people’s lives, interestingly, the program rarely portrays this element, even with the six diverse casts throughout the series. One of the few times that religion is mentioned, was in one of the Trumpisms. “God is in the details” Trump remarked, but he tied the religious concept to wealth. He continued with his explanation, “When people come in to buy something, especially very rich people, they see details; if something’s wrong they see it and it reflects in the price.” Trump is very keen on tying everything to wealth and success, even the idea of religion.

The Jewish religion does have some representation in the series. Given the large representation of Jewish individuals in the entertainment arts, recognition of Judaism is logical. Contestants Brent Buckman, Adam Israelov, Stacey Rotner, Dan Brody, and Lee Bienstock were portrayed in the series as celebrating and/or defending their Jewish faith. Dan and Lee took absence from their respective teams in order to observe their faith.

Additionally, Lee was absent from his team for yet another task, so that he could observe Yom Kippur. Some members of his team criticized Lee for leaving the team and not participating in the task. This was brought up in the boardroom, but Trump defended Lee's choice to observe his faith. However, as stated before, all roads lead to drama and storyline development, therefore religion as a factor was added not out of respect, but as an advancement for the drama factor of the series. By highlighting the contestants' devotion to their Jewish faith, gave the program another arena to exploit for the sake of conflict and drama.

In one presentation to a classroom of people, contestant Clay said that Adam "was the shy, tight Jewish boy." This comment was made after Adam made the comment during the previous presentation about dating and paying for a companion's dinner. Adam was quite embarrassed when Clay took him to task over his comments in the boardroom. While Trump did not like the comment, he decided to take Adam to task over his virginity instead, criticizing Adam for participating in a class on sexuality. Adam had to not only endure Clay's comments, but Trump's comments as well.

In a Zagat restaurant task, Jennifer Crisafulli criticized two elderly Jewish ladies, and remarked to one of her teammates, "Two old ladies complained about the décor." Later she continued to comment about the ladies, blaming them for the team's loss, "It was those two old Jewish bat ladies. They were the pinnacle of the New York, jaded, old bags...they can kiss my ass." Stacey Rotner, one of Jennifer's teammates, was very offended because she herself is Jewish.

Toral, who was Indian Hindu, brought her respective religion into her game strategy. She refused to step up for Project Manager for the Dairy Queen task as she felt

that it was beneath her. Additionally, she was asked to wear the Dairy Queen costume and she refused, citing the costume was stupid and humiliating. Later in the boardroom, Toral attempted to say that she could not wear the costume because her religion prevented her from wearing such a costume. Trump did not believe her explanation, and fired Toral for not volunteering for Project Manager or acquiesce to be in the Dairy Queen costume.

Contestant Raj, of Indian decent, talked about Middle Easterners and the terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York. Raj ridiculed the Iraqis' by making war shouting sounds "lalalalalalala" and he talked about them strapping bombs to themselves. He remarked, "They are always plotting to blow shit up." Disparaging scenes depicted Hispanics engaged in lawn care and servitude. One scene showed several small, Hispanic ground maintenance men performing maintenance on the polo fields for one of the final tasks in Season One. Also, a Hispanic maid answered the door at Trump's apartment when the contestants were invited for a reward. Asians were also included in the latent text's ridicule. Craig, one of the contestants performed a fake Asian accent while trying to sell lemonade by saying, "Two dolla, Two dolla." Again, remembering the producers and editors deemed the materials as worthy of the final cut. *The Apprentice* would take equal opportunity shots at a variety of minority groups.

There were some representations of cultural stereotypes. Contestant Troy was from Texas and had a very thick southern accent. Troy was often depicted as wearing a cowboy hat and cowboy boots and spouting southern colloquialisms. The editors made sure that the final program utilized Troy's southern remarks to build on southern stereotypes. In one episode, Troy remarked to the camera confessional, "We need to be

poppin' like a frog on a hotplate." In another episode, Troy remarked about contestant Katrina who became angry during a task, "Ooo she is as mad as a wet hen." More southern stereotyping came from a couple of other remarks. Contestant Nick was on the street and mistakenly referred to a couple as married; the man remarked, "That's my sister. I'm not a redneck." Which elicited laughter from Nick who also recounted the incident for the confessional camera. In another episode, contestant Derek called himself "White trash." Trump was appalled that Derek would use that term, but certainly allowed it to appear in the final edited version, as it created additional drama. Trump ultimately fired Derek for his derogatory comment.

Sexual Orientation

The *PBS* docudrama/RTV, *An American Family* (1972), featured the first regularly appearing gay person on U.S. television. In fact, eldest son Lance Loud, came out in the second episode of the program (Kachgal, 2004, p. 361). While the number of gay characters on television has increased in number, the characterization of them has not changed. Television still delves into stereotyping gay people.

In *The Apprentice*, there was evidence of reinforcement of stereotyping in sexual orientation, specifically, male homosexuality. Three of the male contestants admitted to being homosexual; Clay Lee from Season Four, and both Carey Sherrell and Derek Arteta from Season Six. Of the six seasons, there were no portrayals of lesbians on the program. That is not to say that all women candidates were heterosexual, but within the confines of the program, the producers/editors did not portray any lesbians.

In Season One, contestant Bill encouraged Nick to use the private jet as a "bedroom" with Amy, he remarked, "You have this beautiful girl all on you, and you're

not doing anything, they are going to think you are a little “sweet,” not that there is anything wrong with that.” Clearly making the comment shed a derogatory light on homosexuality.

In the Zagat restaurant episode, Chris realized that one of the tables of patrons were four gay men on their way to the theatre. Afraid that they gay men would be too harsh on their critique of their restaurant, Chris sent one of the young, handsome men from their team to flirt with the gay men in order to win their favor. Chris remarked that they were only using the advantages inherent in the team. The team was not taken to task in the boardroom for their actions in the restaurant, in trying to win the favor of the gay men with flirtation.

In Season Three, Bren develops the idea to be used in the Dove Body Wash commercial centered around homosexuality. Contestant Michael remarks that he does not like the “gay part” of the idea. Contestant Kendra remarks, “I would never expect a Republican District Attorney from Tennessee to come up with a homosexual commercial.” The commercial showed a female chef acting very sexual with a cucumber attempting to gain the favor of a male kitchen employee under the guise of showing him how to properly wash a cucumber. After this display, the male employee shuns the female chef in favor of another male employee. They walk off arm in arm with the female chef’s mouth agape.

In a criticism and commentary of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, Meyer and Kelley (2004) identify that when a character performs the stereotype of hyper-homosexuality, viewers perceive the person as acting “‘authentically gay”’ (Boylorn, 2008, p. 421). The best example of this Carson Kressley, one of the cast members of

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy. Kressley is an extremely animated extrovert who is witty, and is portrayed as being very lascivious-minded. This construct of gay identity plays into the stereotype that gay men are obsessed with sex (Morrish & O'Mara, 2004, p. 351). While the number of gay characters on television has increased in number, the characterization of them has not changed (Kachgal, 2004, p. 361). Harvey (2006) points out that one way that hegemonic control is enforced is through marginalization. Marginalization of gay characters usually depicts a lack of morality. The idea of sexual perversion is one of the most effective stereotypes in creating the idea of "otherness" and act to separate those from mainstream culture (Harvey, 2006, p. 214-215).

Kressley and the rest of the cast of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* appeared on *The Apprentice*. One of the teams met with them to coordinate their involvement in one of their tasks. The group and the team were brainstorming and Carson remarked, "Any activity involving balls." This comment did illicit laughter and after the task had been decided on, the next shot, was that of the Merrill Lynch's bronze bull statue in Manhattan, and a close-up of the bull's testicles. This shot was added to give extra emphasis to Carson's comment and an attempt to elicit humor. In fact, the juxtaposition only accented the perception that homosexuals are highly focused on sexual activity.

Contestant Clay admitted to being a homosexual. In brainstorming for the teaching task, Clay suggested that the team design a course around the topic of "Sex in the Workplace." To set the stage for the sex class, the camera crew found people making out in a park in New York, and found street signs that contained the word sex within in another word. As part of the class, Clay was very inappropriate. During the teaching session, he said, "What if a guy came into the workplace and I said 'Oh My God,' look at

his ass.” Attendees in the class were very uncomfortable along with Clay’s teammates. Additionally, he continued commentary about the fact that he was gay. Josh, a fellow teammate that clashed with Clay said “Clay is the biggest bitch on this whole team.” In the boardroom, Trump asked Clay if he was a homosexual and Clay affirmed. Clay was not taken to task by Trump over his actions in the classroom.

Contestant Carey was also openly gay. As part of a task to design swimwear for buyers, he displays stereotypical homosexual behavior. Although the team was against his idea, he designed effeminate pink, floral men’s trunks. Aaron makes a comment about the designs not being masculine enough for men to wear and Carey remarks, “Not if they are gay.” Later, the teams modeled their creations. Carey modeled the pink trunks. Many people in the audience were shocked to see Carey in the very tight, pink, floral trunks. Trump also in the audience just shook his head. In a confessional speech, Derek admitted to being gay, but said he was very offended by Carey wearing the pink suit. In the boardroom, Trump took Carey to task over the swimsuit debacle, scolding that the trunks were hideous and Carey had made a grave error. Trump fired him for the incident.

While not homosexual, two of the men were labeled as being metrosexual, Alex Thomason and Sean Yazbeck. During a clothing task, contestant Chris remarked, “Alex is a self-proclaimed metrosexual. A metrosexual is a male that embraces more of his feminine side than other males do.” This was advanced as not being a positive label. Sean Yazbeck was also labeled by contestant Lee as a metrosexual for taking the lead in the Embassy Suites task to design a line of new uniforms for employees.

Age Representations

The demographics of the contestants of *The Apprentice* was youth-dominated. Most of the contestants fell in the mid-twenty to mid-thirty age range. Among all of the seasons, the median age for men was thirty years old, and twenty-nine years old for women. Clearly Trump had a specific age range that he was looking for in his Apprentice candidates. There were a few exceptions such as Kelly Perdue, winner of Season Two, who was in his late thirties. Contestant Andy, twenty-two years old, revealed that he felt Kelly Perdue, thirty-seven, was old. Andy remarked, "I'm going to show him that youth and creativity can win out." Danny Kastner, Craig Williams and Tana Goertz, were in Season Three, and all in their late thirties. Lenny Veltman, and Stacy Schneider were in Season Five and both in their late thirties. Martin Clarke and Kristine Lefebvre both in Season Six, and both in their late thirties. More rare were contestants in their forties. Angie McKnight, in Season Three, was in her early forties and was portrayed as being the "suite mother." Marcus Garrison, appearing in Season Four, was also in his early forties. When approaching from an economic standpoint, this would be the logical choice to remain in the target demographic of eighteen to thirty nine year olds. Viewers relatability with the series characters could enhance sales of products that were featured in the program.

In an interesting side note, in 2007, Trump was sued for age discrimination by Hewett, a forty-nine-year old Massachusetts technology manager that claimed he had been discriminated against and had not been selected as a candidate for *The Apprentice* due to his age (Silverman, 2007). Indeed, age discrimination is evident throughout the

series. The lack of contestants over the age of forty is blaring and seems to suggest that you must be young to work for the Trump Organization.

Manufactured Reality

One of the most unique features of RTV is the nature of its ambiguous realism. A framework must exist for the program in order for viewers to accept and believe the images that are placed in the program. The program itself becomes the non-human narrator of the story as the series of moving images and recorded sounds unrolls for the viewers. Hall (1992) posits that “most filmic texts are held to operate within the conventions and practices of “realism” (p. 159). Indeed the visual images are powerful as the viewer accepts the visual images as the narrator of the “truth.” There is a definite sense of an intangible narrative presence that chooses, orders, and presents the narrative (Kozloff, 1992, pp. 78-79). The narrative acts to tie all of the threads of the story together to provide the viewer with a complete overview (Kozloff, 1992, p. 82). It is through this process that the program gains legitimacy and believability.

Once this believability has been established, the process of manufacturing narrative can move beneath the radar. With RTV programming, there are many artificial aspects employed to convey “the real.” RTV creates a manufactured environment along with a creation that resembles a “living soap opera.” Within this living soap opera, the contestants become lab rats as the environment is manipulated by production to create the illusion of reality. Also for the viewer, they are sent into the various characters and created plotlines as dictated by the program (Allen, 1992, p. 111; Iser, 1978). RTV programming uses both surveillance and a type of incarceration within a rule-bound micro-world as the mediated route to witnessing or experiencing authentic moments of

self-revelation and/or emotional revelation (Biressi & Nunn, 2005, p. 29). Tears, outbursts, and train wrecks is what sells in this genre, therefore production must capture this, even if it has to create it artificially.

Bagley (2001) argued that while the use of documentary techniques establishes the texts as unarguably real, both executives and cast members admit that RTV is one of a “manipulated production environment” (p. 74). While certainly people are doing real things, the producers have set up the events for the program. Not only are the participants aware that the environment has been set up for express purpose of filming, but, in some cases, they are also told what to do or say (Hall 2003; Nabi, Biely, Morgan & Stitt, 2003, pp. 193-194). This is a compromise reality in its truest sense of the word (Stern, 2009, p. 53). Hall (2003) asserts that viewers are aware of the production process of creating media texts, which more often than not shifts their perceptions of realism (Stern, 2009, p. 68).

Kilborn (1994) asserts that the desire to create drama leads reality television producers to distort “the very reality they claim to be presenting . . . in a way that makes it impossible for the viewer to decide how much is based on factual evidence and how much is essentially imaginative fabrication” (p. 431). The blending of realism and dramatic narrative, in effect, collapses boundaries between the real and unreal (Hall, 2006).

One aspect of the unreal is the production timeframe, as it is not in reality the way it is presented to the viewers. Since viewers watch one episode per week, it appears that the tasks takes place one week at a time. The eighteen week run is compressed as each season’s production time is only four to six weeks. Therefore, at least two tasks must be

completed each week. The implications for this are that not only are the production times crunched, but so are the contestants. The contestants are run into the dirt, barely having time to sleep because of the tight schedules that production makes them keep. This only adds to the drama factor as the contestants are forced to endure long days of shooting with little sleep. Sleep deprivation, lack of food, and alcohol helps to fray nerves and fan the drama factor in *The Apprentice*.

Production teams often provide alcohol to participants in RTV programs. In this case they point to the need for drama and the presence of alcohol as a social lubricant as one variable in the dramatic formula (Stern, 2009, p. 62). Consuming alcohol helps to super-charge the pressure cooker that exists for the contestants and can act as a catalyst for both drama and conflict. This is an ethically charged product, but the program does give acceptability of alcohol consumption when the contestants are shown with production-supplied alcohol. Confirmation of production-provided alcohol is confirmed in contestant Kristi Frank's comments in an *FHM* interview:

There was a lot more drinking on the show than you saw. Sometimes they wouldn't feed us and we'd have drinks. I think they'd hold off on serving the food because delirious and wasted, we would say anything." This is yet another manipulation tactic of the production team to amp the drama and affect the "reality" of the program. ("Donald's Darlings," 2004).

The contestants are shown moving about with one medium-sized suitcase. For the time that they are at the suite and for the variety of outfits that the contestants wear, a medium sized suitcase would never be able to contain all of the contestants belongings. The long questionnaire application form for *The Apprentice* may reveal some answers to

this. The form asks for all of the prospective contestants sizes. In fact, it may be that production may provide all or some of the wardrobe for the contestants. Based on the fact that the environment is so tightly controlled, it actually is quite likely. This would also explain contestants outfits that match the weekly sponsors logo colors as well.

The losing team must pack and bring their respective suitcases to the boardroom, as at least one member of that team will likely be fired for losing the task. When a contestant is fired, supposedly, they cannot return to the suite, but must take the elevator “down to the street.” A taxi waits at the curb for the fired contestant. After the contestant enters the taxi, they encounter a confessional camera and they are directed to discuss the firing in the boardroom. The taxi whisks the fired contestant “away.” The audience assumes that they are being sent home, but in actuality, they are brought to a local hotel and are sequestered for the remainder of production. Production feels that this is necessary to protect the identity of the final contestants until production is complete and all remaining contestants can be sent home at one time. Also, the contestants need to be available since the last two candidates are able to select a team from the previous contestants.

In some RTV programs, confessionals are manned by unseen production staff, in private, soundproof rooms. The contestants answer questions from the unseen crew, lending for a more personal experience for the contestants to pour out their true thoughts about the other contestants and drama that has transpired. Sometimes, the contestants give clues for strategy for game play as well. In the case of *The Apprentice*, the outdoor confessionals are shot by a crew that have asked the contestants specific questions for them to comment on. These contestant confessionals are sprinkled throughout the

program. These confessionals act as a device to provide running dialogue about the other contestants, the action and the drama. They are strategically placed throughout the episode to provide maximum dramatic effect.

In one episode, contestants Charmaine and Leslie went into a women's restroom. The cameras followed them into the restroom and showed their legs under the door of the bathroom stalls, with their pants down around their ankles. As their conversation continued, it is quite possible that the dialogue was added to the footage, as viewers cannot actually see the women while they are speaking. Huff (2006) writes, "A report in *Radar* magazine, citing five veteran production staffers of reality shows, said editors routinely clip together bits of dialog to have people saying something on air they never said" (p. 172). This process of marrying unrelated audio clips is known as "Frankenbyting," and is a technique that is commonly used in RTV to create more "entertaining" dialogue (Essany, 2008, p. 153). If dialogue was happening between contestants in a two shot, for example, the camera is only capturing the back of one candidate, making it is impossible to see their face as they speak. Most of the time throughout *The Apprentice*, the viewers can actually see the contestants as they are speaking, however, there is no doubt that this process was used at times throughout the series. One can only imagine the manipulation that has occurred in RTV programming using this technique.

The use of the dichotomy of the theme of the seasons such as women vs. the men; the "book smarts" versus the "street smarts; the "haves" versus the "have-nots," also created artificial conflict thereby heightening the drama. Additionally, Trump would twist, change, or add rules of the game from time to time. This manipulation could have

been executed to assist in affecting the outcome of the game. In Season Two, the rule was added that the project manager on the winning team was to be exempt from being fired in the following week's task. Also in Season Two, Trump twists the game by putting one man on the women's team and one woman on the men's team, with each respective team deciding who they would send to the opposing team. For Season Six, the winning PM would always join Trump in the boardroom to assist in the questioning of the losing team. For the first time, instead of selecting two contestants to go into the final, Trump allowed four contestants to be in the finale for Season Six. He did not fire anyone to the surprise of the four remaining contestants, and allowed the four to return home, with the winner to be determined at the live finale from the Hollywood Bowl.

The breaking of the fourth wall only punctuates the artificiality of the program. Production used an interesting effect of original boardroom footage, edited with a matching action of a mocked-up boardroom in the live finale. The walls of the boardroom were lifted to reveal a TV studio audience to punctuate Trump's announcement of Bill as the winner of Season One. This was repeated for the announcement of Kelly for the Season Two finale.

Character Creation

RTV programs create characters. The personas that are conveyed by the program, may or may not be a real characterization of the contestants. Audience perceptions of the contestants are tightly controlled by production that possess full editorial control. Through actions, dialogue, and editing, RTV can portray the participants in an unreal light. For example, male contestant Raj was characterized as a "womanizing player" throughout Season Two. Trump also made remarks that Raj was a hound-dog around

women and drove them crazy. Raj was shown to be flirting most of the time, even going as far to ask tennis star athlete Anna Kornikova out on a date while involved in a task. Eventually, Raj was fired. True to the characterization of him, as he left the boardroom, he asked Robin, Trump's receptionist, for her phone number and also asked if she has a boyfriend; she declined his offer.

Omarosa, who has been discussed previously, is someone that is portrayed as irritating and disruptive. Although Omarosa had many infractions that could have resulted in her being fired, Trump kept her since she created interest and drama. Viewers loved to "hate" her, or at least the character that she portrayed. Production exploited this drama-factor in the storyline. A small piece of plaster fell on Omarosa's head on a jobsite, and she created a tremendous hubbub about the incident, claiming that the small piece of plaster gave her a concussion. Throughout the episode, she used this injury as an excuse not participate in the task.

More of Omarosa is revealed in another episode that was very Omarosa-centric. In an episode surrounding the task of featuring selected artists at an art gallery, Omarosa flirts with one male artist that incorporates his own DNA into his paintings, such as hair, toenail clippings, etc. Omarosa, seemingly fascinated, touched one of his paintings and asked about one of the genetic materials in the painting, "What is this clear?" Editors clearly included this with the underlying impression that the clear material was that of semen, since the artist used his own genetic material. This was purely salacious in nature.

In the same episode, Omarosa discussed an art piece by another artist, that which she remarks is entitled, the "Hallowed Pussy" which Omarosa takes delight in discussing. During a confessional in the same episode, Omarosa criticizes one of her teammates for

doing a poor job at the task and remarked that contestant Heidi “would rather sell Tampax than artwork.” All of the emphasis on Omarosa’s behavior lead up to her being fired on this episode. Clearly, she was a contestant that helped to garner ratings, and the production team was squeezing the last bit of Omarosa’s antics out before she was fired by Trump.

Contestant Pamela was described by Bradford as a woman that “looks like Cruella DeVille.” She was painted as being hard-nosed and almost masculine. At one point, Trump sent Pamela to the men’s team. She remarked, “My penis is getting larger with every minute.” Contestants Brent and Sam were painted as being emotionally unstable and eventually being fired because of that.

Real things did occur in the midst of this pseudo-reality. The real drama is used to bolster the pseudo-reality of the program. In the middle of one of the shoots, some workmen were drilling concrete making renovations for a new tenant coming into the building. Trump told one of the production staff to stop them since it was disrupting production. Interestingly, this distraction was not edited out of the final program. At another occasion, Omarosa barged back into the boardroom before she was directed to do so. The effect was odd and also a surprise that it was not edited out of the final cut of the program.

On a more serious note, Heidi Bressler’s mother was diagnosed with colon cancer during *The Apprentice* shoot. Heidi was shown talking about her mother’s illness and crying to other contestants. She was also shown having sensitive, private conversations with her mother about her illness and her condition. Trump asked her if she wanted to leave the competition, but she declined to leave. In another serious situation, Rebecca

broke her ankle during one of the rewards, early in Season Four, at a hockey game. Trump asked her if she wanted to go home, but she declined and decided to stay to compete for the coveted spot. She was on crutches for weeks, at a distinct disadvantage in the tasks because of her condition. Randall's grandmother died, which was real, but became artificial when Trump brought Randall to the funeral in his helicopter.

Oppositional Reading: Analysis of "Cruise Control"

The textual analysis that follows is an example of an oppositional reading of one episode of Season Five, "Cruise Control." The episode displays a variety of messages based on social representations and commercial interests that are inherent within the text of the program. This reading is included to provide a vivid example of the type of content that is present in the episodes of *The Apprentice*. This example is particularly important for those that have not had the opportunity to view the program.

(The opening scene of The Apprentice is actually a recap on the firing and some of the action surrounding it from the previous episode.)

The opening shot, splashes an aerial view of the nighttime New York city skyline across the screen and includes a beautiful view of the Empire State Building, which sets the scene squarely in New York. The viewers are then catapulted into the inner sanctum of the boardroom, where Trump's interrogation takes place of the six candidates of the losing team. With the lighting design and colors of the boardroom, it is strangely reminiscent of the film noir police interrogation scenes, popularized in the 1940s. This is done to invoke a discomfort from both the contestants and the viewers. Trump not only verbally presents himself as the boss, but also positions his body in such a way that indicates that he is the dictator of this domain. The camera then cuts to the suite where

the rest of the candidates are chatting about the possibilities of what may be happening in the board room and serving up salad for a meal. A promotional shot of Trump Ice bottled water is shown on the table. The contestants mostly talk about Brent who is an unconventional candidate to say the least, that seems to create turmoil within the team. The men candidates are shown sitting and talking while the female candidates are serving food to them as they engage in the conversation. This of course harkens to the traditional role of women serving food to the men while they relax at the table.

Brent is Jewish and a comment was made jokingly that he may come back to the suite and ask “Where are the bagels?” This comment was invoking the stereotype of bagels being a favored food of Jewish people. The action then returned to the boardroom, to the typical Trump-style grilling as it continues. Trump expresses to Brent that he is a negative influence and a troublemaker and that no one likes him on the team. In the program’s character shaping, Brent was portrayed as an irritation to the team, and Trump continued to demonize him in the boardroom. Trump abruptly ended the discussion by using his famous tagline, “Brent - You’re Fired.” Shaping Brent’s character in this way added to the drama factor. The producers engaged in stereotyping with his cultural heritage. Ultimately, Brent was portrayed as a disruption to the team, and therefore Trump had to punish him since he impeded business progress. Within the confines of the program, the ultimate in punishment is being fired by Trump.

The remaining team exits the boardroom and returns to the suite. Once back in the suite, they relay how the action unfolded in the boardroom to the other contestants. At the end of this exchange, the camera focuses on a bag of bagels on the table. Yet more commentary on Brent being Jewish and being fired. An additional dramatic exchange

takes place in the bedroom cubicles of the suite as contestants confront each other about things that were said in the boardroom. The walls of the sleeping cubicles have been erected for the express purpose of creating compartmentalized sleeping quarters. The walls are only about seven feet tall, allowing the sound to travel easily between the cubicles. Contestants Roxanne and Andrea have a one-on-one heated, but quiet, exchange. With this, the opening sequence, recapping the last episode ends.

The program opens into its theme song, “Money, Money, Money.” The words “What if you could have it all?” are splashed across the opening sequence. Images of Trump Towers, the Wall Street Stock Exchange, Trump’s private helicopter, Trump’s private jet, Trump exiting a limo in a suit and walking down the tarmac towards the camera, and *The Apprentice* logo money clip with one hundred dollar bills in it. The sequence is designed to convey power to Trump and that this power affords luxury.

After the introduction to Trump and his wealth, the segment launches into a montage of the season’s candidates with their names being displayed on a stock exchange ticker. This is interspersed with shots of large stacks of bills in a counting machine, clocks, a huge “T” that fills the screen, Trump, and Trump’s private jet, and the Trump Taj Mahal. Trump takes the opportunity to showcase some of his real estate holdings. The contestants are now playing in Trump’s world, which he rules. If they play by the rules correctly, they will be rewarded. Images of clocks are a motif throughout the episode to convey the feeling of urgency for the teams to complete their tasks. The next shot shows a hand that signs Trump’s signature, and the phrase, “It’s nothing personal, it’s just business,” splashes across the screen. *The Apprentice* logo is again displayed on a

money clip with bills and the music stops, signaling the conclusion of the opening sequence of the program.

An aerial shot is shown of the cruise ship the *Norwegian Jewel* at port in the New York harbor. Trump is in the wheel house talking with the crew, with Carolyn Kepcher and Bill Ransic in tow. Trump, always in control, is now talking to the Captain, in control of the vessel. The interior shots of the vessel are designed to showcase the rich, luxurious feel of the ship's interior, presented against a backdrop of classical music. The contestants gather in a sumptuous lobby as Trump and his assistants descend a golden staircase. Trump descends the golden staircase as king. Trump gives his usual marketing/branding sponsor plug/speech and industry statistics, and then proceeds to explain the task at hand to the contestants.

The teams must produce a thirty-second commercial promoting Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL) and the new Freestyle Cruising option. This option presents passengers with a choice of a flexible-style schedule instead of a fixed schedule for their cruising experience. Passengers can dine and engage in activities at their leisure instead of adhering to a schedule which is typical on most cruise ships. The teams are told that they will have access to professional camera crews and editors. However, they will only have three hours to complete the shooting of their footage before the cruise ship's departure. Trump introduces the executives from NCL that will judge the competition based on the originality of the final commercial. Trump reminds the group that one team will be "richly rewarded," while the other will have to face him in the boardroom with someone ultimately being fired. Trump delivers the message clearly that in this world *one must be*

a winner, and winning is everything. If one loses, he will be punished for not successfully winning the task.

Beautiful exterior shots of the vessel are shown, along with many views of NCL logos splashed across the screen with background conga music as accompaniment. The teams gather for their respective planning sessions. The NCL logo is also prominently featured throughout the shots of the meetings on signs, t-shirts, towels, etc. The two groups muddle through the usual brainstorming and in-fighting. Each group makes a decision on which theme and direction that their respective commercial will head. The Gold Rush team decided on contestant Lenny's (Trump calls him "the Russian") idea of "the castaway."

The general premise is that a castaway man is spotted while stranded on a floating piece of debris and is rescued by the NCL ship's crew. Once on board, he is treated to all the luxuries that the cruise ship has to offer. However, Lenny didn't really mean to suggest a literal interpretation, only figurative. Lenny's idea was to present a metaphor of a man having been "stranded by life or business," and he is taken away to a magical world of freedom. In this case, freedom to take advantage of his choice of options on the ship.

The group misunderstands Lenny's idea and decides to use the literal interpretation. It is unclear as to why this action was not stopped somewhere along the way to be corrected. Perhaps Lenny tried, but this was not shown. The fact that Lenny is a foreigner really suggests the communication gap that can exist between cultures. Lenny may not have been able to explain his idea more fully to the understanding of the group. Strangely though, it also did not come up, or at least not on camera, that the team had

misunderstood. More gaps in the actions indicating that something may have been missing from the televised footage.

Staccato music with a metronome beat plays in the background creating a feeling of time ticking away, while shots of multiple locations aboard the luxury vessel are showcased once again as the teams' are shooting their commercials. It is a commercial, within a commercial, with NCL as the star-sponsor of the show, and the beautiful *Norwegian Jewel* as the superstar.

The Synergy team took a more traditional approach and decided on an idea of presenting passengers in black and white footage having an awful time on another cruise line. They are magically transported to the fabulous *Norwegian Jewel*, to which the same passengers begin having a wonderful time, in color. The usual chaos ensues with the contestants trying to complete the task, while tensions run high. The confessionals are interspersed throughout this portion of the action as the usual back-biting and complaining about the Project Manager and others occur. Of course, all the while, glamorous footage of the *Norwegian Jewel* is presented.

The footage cuts away to Trump's delivery of his Trumpism, "Listen to your people." He delivers the message that smart leaders always need to listen to the smart people that they have hired. As such, he is shown in his office speaking with Kendra, winner of the third season, and listening to her ideas for future plans for the company. Trump is presented as the preeminent authority on business practice, and of course, he always practices what he preaches for business tenets.

As Gold Rush shoots their "castaway" commercial, more shots, both exterior and interior are shown of the ship. The usual chaos ensues with the contestants trying to

complete the task, while tensions run high. More chaos is usually depicted for the losing team. One of the scenes of their commercial takes place in the theater with scantily-clad dancers doing a routine on the stage as two of the men contestants direct them. A gratuitous shot to showcase the women's bodies, and the men in control and directing them. The confessionals are interspersed throughout this portion of the action as the usual back-biting and complaining about the Project Manager and others occur.

Two of the female contestants go to the women's restroom. As they are talking about some of the mistakes being made by other contestants, the camera followed them into the restroom. The footage is quite inappropriate. As the women continue their conversation, the camera shows their legs under the doors of the bathroom stalls, with their pants down around their ankles, complete with a toilet flush. Albeit inappropriate, this was an attempt at punctuating "realism." It is quite possible that the entire dialogue was inserted as the audience could not actually see the women as they spoke. However, the conversation seemed to have continuity as the women continued the same discussion after emerging from the stalls.

More promotion for NCL as more gorgeous shots of the cruise ship, interior and exterior are shown. The dining room is elegantly appointed in sumptuous fabric and gold fixtures. The camera focuses on what appears to be a Faberge egg on display in the dining room. The task ends, the teams disembark, and the cruise ship is shown from an aerial view leaving the port. More glamorization of New York as views of the New York skyline at night, including the Empire State Building, are shown. The camera cuts to the teams editing their commercials, complete with the appropriate in-fighting and drama. Again, more promotion for NCL.

Synergy gave their presentation to the NCL executives. All of the team went into the conference room with navy shirts, wearing a NCL-blue scarf, echoing the colors of the NCL logo colors. The commercial was a beautiful ode to NCL produced with beautiful footage and voice-over narration with the “bad time/good time” idea of the couple, and all of the wonderful amenities that NCL offers for cruising.

Gold Rush went in to give their presentation. The team did not take advantage of the opportunity to wear the NCL colors as Synergy had. The final, edited commercial depicted a dirty castaway on flotsam covered in seaweed. The castaway is then shown clean, revitalized and enjoying the bar, grand meals, the party life, and a full spa treatment. The commercial had no dialogue and was subtitled with orchestration. With that the presentations end, and Trump swoops in via a black limo, to hear the final comments from the executives.

The executives were displeased with the castaway idea. The final product was considered to be inappropriate and unacceptable ad for their company and the team failed to deliver the idea of Freestyle Cruising. The executives announced Synergy as the winner of the task. Trump announced that they had been dealing with the *Norwegian Jewel*, but would now move on to the most precious jewels of them all, diamonds. Trump continues with the opulent prize that the winners will receive. The team will be brought to a “secret” Brinks’ vault to view lavish and expensive diamonds. Trump touts that the vault has more than one hundred million dollars worth of diamonds. The diamonds are owned by the Pluchenik Group, a worldwide diamond dealer. Trump also tells the winning team that each one of the members will take home thirty thousand dollars worth of diamonds. He reminds the losing team that they will be joining him in the boardroom

for a firing. Another reinforcement of the idea that money and luxury is everything, and that one will be richly rewarded if they are able to please the client and move business forward.

The winning team, Synergy, is treated to their opulent, lavish prize. The camera cuts to Brinks armed guards with bullet proof vests. The camera shows only the women being checked with a security wand over their bodies. Another opportunity to showcase the women's bodies. Suspense-type music plays while one of the guards opens the vault. Once the door opens, beautiful upbeat orchestra music begins playing. The women in the group are positively giddy with excitement. Once inside, millions of dollars of diamonds are revealed for the enjoyment of the contestants on the team. They were allowed to pick the diamonds up and handle them. Some of the women put the huge loose diamonds on top of their hands to view them. Large Brinks logo bags are in the mise en scene. Contestant Ali remarks, "I think size does matter. I don't think a diamond could ever be too big." An obvious use of a double entendre with sexual innuendo and diamond size.

Some of the diamonds fell onto the floor, but were quickly retrieved by the Brinks employees who remark, "We never lose our diamonds." Evidence of more focus on how important these riches are. A tiara is brought out and touted to be worth four and a one half million dollars. Contestant Roxanne gets to model the expensive diamond tiara since she is the winning Project Manager. Then they are told that they can select any diamonds that total to thirty thousand dollars as their own personal prize to keep. The women are very excited and select the largest diamonds available and again retort, "Size does matter." The men in the winning group are much more subdued and select diamonds for

their respective significant others. The entire scene in the Brinks' vault embodies consumption and opulent living.

More night shots of the Empire State Building and Trump Tower. Ominous Gregorian chant music brings the action into the boardroom. Lenny's "castaway" idea was lambasted by Trump, Carolyn, and Bill. Trump despises Lenny's idea of the castaway. Trump told Lenny that when presenting the picture of luxurious travel on a cruise ship, the last image that the executives would want in a commercial, would be that of a castaway floating on flotsam or jetsam. This action was punished, as the image was that of misfortune and the down-trodden, and of no use to the NCL executives nor does it serve the Trump organization in any way. The other punishable action was the fact that no dialogue was present and Trump felt this was also unacceptable and served no one.

Trump normally allowed the losing Project Manager to bring back two people into the final boardroom. Dan, the Project Manager, chose Lee and Tarek and not Lenny. Trump tried to encourage Dan to bring a third person, that person being Lenny. Trump was trying to sway Dan's decision and make an exception so he could get Lenny in to fire him for not serving the client. Despite Trump's attempt to sway Dan, Dan did not bring Lenny into the boardroom. Afterwards, Trump continued to pummel Dan for not bringing Lenny back into the boardroom. Ultimately Trump fired Dan for not bringing Lenny back into the boardroom, in order for Trump to fire him for creating a negative concept for the client. in one way or another, Trump was going to make someone pay for the bad concept.

The three contestants left the boardroom. The elevator opened for Lee and Tarek, then a few seconds later, the second elevator opened for the fired "down to the street"

Dan. Dan exits the Trump Tower and enters a taxi cab with a lit Yahoo! Hot Jobs sign on top. This reflects the partnership between *Yahoo!* and *The Apprentice* producers. Then, a spot was inserted that encouraged viewers to apply for the next *Apprentice* season to be shot in Los Angeles. Dan's taxi cab confessional reveals that it was regrettable that the team could not pull together to win the task, but he was excited to be going home to his family. His excitement for going home to his family was allowed to be shown because after all, Lenny should have been fired for the debacle, and unfortunately, Dan had to take the fall, although perhaps not deserved.

In conclusion, many themes were present in this episode. First and foremost, the program serves its sponsor and their product. Anyone that stands in the way of this end game is eliminated. Second, the idea of "precious jewels" was hammered in, with the luxury of the cruise ship linked to the opulent diamonds. Trump rewarded the winning team with these riches since they served the sponsor well. Winning is worthy of riches. Third, culture was an issue. Lenny may have been unfairly judged since he was a foreigner and there may have been a communication gap between he and the rest of the team. Also, the program took jabs at the fact that Brent was Jewish. Additionally, Brent's characterization may have been concocted by the production team. Lastly, women were portrayed in subordinate manner including the use of portraying women as sex objects. Also the use of inappropriate camera behavior as two of the women contestants went to the bathroom. In the end, the program will be shaped to Trump's advantage.

This chapter set out to illustrate *The Apprentice's* manifest and latent messages with an oppositional reading analysis of social representations accompanied by pertinent examples. Stereotypes prevail, as in most televised content. Through a close reading,

social representations are evident in *The Apprentice* as well. The social representations lead to underlying social statements, which when broadcast to millions of people tuned in to a media product, can have influence. Statements on certain topics became evident and included gender and gender roles, stereotypes of ethnicity and culture, use of sexuality, and character creation.. All of these elements work in concert to create a living soap opera, which is manufactured, but appears to be real. Through editing and other techniques, the production team creates the elements that embody and define the program.

There is social convention, which is expected with a twist added to garner interest. Beginning with Trump's nature of being known as a womanizer, which is expected to come through the program, the way in which he treats subjects and reacts to certain subjects can be very surprising. Giving a "wink and a nod" to the women using their sexuality in the program, was contradicted with him actually telling the women not to use their sexuality. However, this was in response to assistant Carolyn's remarks and potential backlash from female viewers. The circumstances almost forced him to take action. The females in the program mostly typify youth, beauty, and fitness of an "ideal" female.

Gender representations maintained the status quo. Female contestants are often seen as not only sex objects but also weak, and not being true contenders in both the game and in the world of business. They are painted as being ill-equipped and at times, emotional. The men often exhibited male prowess with sexual dialogue or exhibition and the objectification of women. They were also painted as being powerful and well-suited for the business world.

In a program that is about landing the job, one would not expect Trump to dabble and enquire about the sex lives or respective romances of the contestants. Those elements have nothing to do with the premise of the program, however, these elements and Trump's discussion of them make the program more titillating. These elements and others such as character creation, adds to the heightened drama. Additionally, the program is manipulated and cut together after the results of the competition are already known. Certain characters in the program are highlighted, certain drama is highlighted, and particularly comments and dialogue segments are highlighted, that support the overall drama and resulting endgame of the episode.

The unreal is edited into the real that the viewers encounter. While some of these undoubtedly espouse the views of the executive producers of the program, in the end, all of these are included with the hopes of increasing viewer interest, leading to increased ratings, and the value and monetary power that *The Apprentice* franchise can wield.

The Apprentice used a short-hand technique of defining, and thereby reinforcing social stereotypes. It is common for television programs to maintain this social hegemony. Diversity does not serve the commercial interests of *The Apprentice* as they generally try to please a mostly White, homogenous, middle of the road audience. There is a lack of diversity because diversity, by and large, does not serve the program. The only color that *The Apprentice* is concerned with is the color green; that of money.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

This project began in the realm of the study of brand/product placement, with extreme interest in the ways in which commerce and art intersect in the entertainment arts and for success must develop a symbiotic relationship so both entities can survive and thrive. One entity cannot survive without the other in the entertainment arts. This study observed and dissected this relationship in the original series of *The Apprentice*. The series was recognized as a highly profitable, successful RTV program and a postmodern popular cultural artifact. The success of the intersection of commerce and art product was recognized along with the potential cultural impact of this series.

The Apprentice and its producers, Mark Burnett and Donald Trump, garnered much attention for the use of RTV, brand/product placement techniques and the development of a modern television sponsorship framework. Using the existing scholarly studies based on the original series, and a literature review that included multiple cross-disciplinary subjects, these research questions became the basis of the inquiry for this research project. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1: How does *The Apprentice* use brand placement and integration techniques?

RQ2: How does *The Apprentice* contribute to consumerism?

RQ3: How does *The Apprentice* portray reality?

RQ4: What social commentary is present in *The Apprentice*?

The theoretical analysis began with the Burkean (1967) theory that literature offers “equipment for living” (p. 293). Brummet (1984) expanding this theory to

“televised discourse” qualifying as literature, thereby setting the theory in motion for using a paradigm that allows for the possibility of audience members using televised discourse as equipment for living. This theoretical paradigm was applied to all ninety episodes of *The Apprentice* and resulted in the analysis of *The Apprentice* as televised discourse for living, or ways in which viewers potentially may use the manifest and latent content as guides to living their lives. The textual discourse analysis utilizes Hall’s (1980) oppositional reading technique. This technique is used to reject the actuated surface meanings, and to deeply interrogate the textual content, in an effort to tease out underlying themes within the text of *The Apprentice*. Social televisual discourse included the cross-disciplinary subjects of consumerism, ethnicity, gender, ageism, stereotyping, corporate and business discourse, and the elusive myth of the American Dream.

RQ1: How does The Apprentice use brand placement and integration techniques?

RQ1 addresses the use of brand placement and integration techniques for the series. While RTV is a perfect match for product placement, integration and assimilation, the way in which the techniques were manipulated provides the program’s most unique feature. Mark Burnett and Donald Trump, the series executive producers, developed a ground-breaking use of sponsorship, brand/product placement and storyline integration, to build an unshakeable pyramid of marketing communications. The all-encompassing technique provided opportunities for the audience to listen to the contestants talk about the respective sponsor’s products, and watch them use the products and fully interact with the brand/products. In addition, marketing materials were shown in the form of t-shirts, signage and billboards, both center-stage and in the mise-en-scene. All of this resulted in an hour long commercial for the sponsors’ brand/product. By wrapping the episodes’

storylines around the sponsors' brand/product placement, effectively fusing the two entities, the power of the promotion became an extremely tight construct. This fusing which combined storyline with its advertising content, created a "3-D mapping" of the sponsors' products, which acts to elevate the prominence of the product by giving the audience a total "view" of the product.

The brand/product placement was also supported by spot advertisements that were borne out of separate deals that the sponsors made with the NBC network. Ancillary outlets were also used for bolstering the brand/product placement such as the use of the Internet, merchandising, tie-ins, advertising campaigns, contests and supporting corporations brought on board to support and enhance the major sponsor of the episode. Companies utilized the series in many ways including to assist with branding in the marketplace, bolstering existing ad campaigns, increasing corporate visibility, to roll-out new products and expand existing product lines, and at times, simply to boost sagging sales. *The Apprentice* featured numerous and varied large sponsors, including Mattel, QVC, Procter & Gamble, Sony, Wal-Mart, *Yahoo!*, Best Buy, Outback Steakhouse, Microsoft, QVC, Burger King, Unilever, General Motors, Chrysler and the Dial Corporation. Most of these companies saw a huge spike in sales after exposure on the program. All of this was designed to ultimately drive marketplace interest in the brands/products. The "3-D mapping" in combination with all ancillary outlets, became the program's greatest strength developing a marketing juggernaut the likes of which have not been seen since in RTV programming.

While the program helped build equity in the sponsored brands/products, it also built equity in *The Apprentice* brand. *The Apprentice* board games and other merchandise

from the original series is still available in the retail marketplace. Equity-building for Trump assisted him in the negotiation of future deals with companies that were interested in co-opting with *The Apprentice* brand and the program. The program has assisted Trump in many levels of promotion of his business prowess. Trump had the opportunity to build equity in his own name brand and Trump empire. The series gave Trump an outlet to promote himself, his real estate holdings, and all of his retail product lines. In fact, in a television interview, Trump admitted that he embarked on the series to expressly give his empire a bigger and broader reach and appeal (“CNBC Titans,” 2010).

Trump took the opportunity to promote his grown children, Donald Trump Jr. and Ivanka Trump, both of which work for the Trump organization. The series has made them media icons as well. Media reports also acknowledge the fact that Trump may be seeking a presidential run which he has confirmed in several television interviews. The timing of this announcement runs concurrent with his new *Apprentice* program which gives him an effective promotional vehicle to bolster his possible quest for office.

RQ2: How does The Apprentice contribute to consumerism?

RQ2 addresses the series contribution to consumerism. Consumerism, in the case of this discussion, refers to the concept of an ever-expanding consumption of goods. While advantageous to the economy, the consumption of goods can have negative societal effects, such is the case of heavy consumerism present in America. American television, as a medium, has powerful high penetration in American homes and is a prime area for commercialized content (Friedman, 2002). As an ever-growing genre of television programming, RTV programming uses highly developed dramatic effect and goes to great lengths to tie the viewers to the participants in the storyline. This makes

RTV a perfect vehicle for promotion, and in fact, results reveal that “emotionally engaging” programming increases the ability to recognize brands, and increases positive brand feeling, and strengthens purchase interest for products in product placement and commercials (“Nielsen Says,” 2007, n.p.).

Based on the results of this study, *The Apprentice* is a RTV program that spurred its viewers to purchase products from the series participating sponsors. Immediately following the airing of many episodes, many of the sponsors cited a spike in sales, products selling out and in general huge responses to their products on both the Internet and in the marketplace. As part of the storyline integration for ice cream purveyor Ciao Bella, *The Apprentice* contestants created two new flavors. At the end of the episode, viewers were encouraged to sign onto Yahoo! Local to find store locations in thirteen markets that would have the new flavors available. The term, “*Apprentice* Ice Cream” was the third most-searched term on Yahoo! that day (Dehnart, 2005). The thirteen locations selling the flavors were sought out by viewers and most of the locations had sold out of the special *Apprentice* flavors by noon the next day (Dehnart, 2005). Similar interest was cited with the Staples desk organizer licensed as “The Desk *Apprentice*.” The evening of the broadcast, the viewers were directed to search that term on Yahoo! and to locate the corresponding purchase page. The total amount of merchandise of this one product, sold in two hours time, totaled \$525 thousand in sales (Lieb, 2005, n.p.). The winning product continues to be a success for Staples and now, more than five years later, this product is still available at Staples with the registered trademark name, Staples The Desk *Apprentice* Rotating Desk Organizer (see Appendix B). This product is a

reminder of the power of *The Apprentice* to make a powerful case to the audience to continue to purchase the products seen on the program.

The results of this study revealed that most of the sponsored products and product categories presented in the series were not high-end, luxury items (see Appendix C). While there were some high-ticket items presented such as automobiles, the trend in the brand/product placement in *The Apprentice* was to present affordable products that the viewership could purchase en masse. Cleaning products, clothing, health/beauty products, food products, mainstream restaurant chains, and electronics were popular items that the series presented to the viewers for purchase. The under-current or latent message was to buy, buy, buy as the episodes wrapped around the sponsors' brand/products.

The series also purported this "ideal" of making purchases and surrounding one's life with purchased items as a positive way to live in America. First, the promotion scheme that was constructed for the program was perpetrated solely to sell product. This selling platform was huge for *The Apprentice* and set it apart in the marketplace as an arena for sponsors to sell and for Trump to hawk his wares as well. Through the marketing component of the program, messages to consume were prevalent. *The Apprentice* advanced consumption with their promotion of brands/products. Through the constructs of the program, it is clear that *The Apprentice* teaches that consumerism and consumption is a positive paradigm.

Tied closely to the concept of consumerism is Trump's idea of the American Dream. Trump attempted to tie up the consumption of goods with happiness, success and the realization of the American Dream in one neat package. This was mostly presented in the form of rewards for the winning teams. With expensive rare foods and wines,

exclusive, upscale restaurants, diamonds, travel to exclusive locations, luxury yachts and private aircraft, Trump imbued this idea. Through images of Trump's properties and holdings, Trump's words, the contestants words and being surrounded by luxury and luxury items, the series presents the recipe to the viewers for them to gain a powerful, wealthy and successful life. Indeed, *The Apprentice* demonstrates that it may be an influential tool for living through consuming and may be used as a guide for living through its powerful messages of consuming.

Consumerism has a relation to capitalism. Televisual discourse may affect how people view business and the prevailing corporate culture in America. The capitalistic aspect of *The Apprentice* taught viewers lessons about the ideology of capitalism and business practices. While each episode had a business lesson, the entire series has an over-arching narrative about the corporate world (McGuigan, 2008). With regard to ethics and the corporate world of *The Apprentice* series, ethics was very secondary to the importance of serving business and its needs. There were times that contestants that exhibited an obvious lack of ethics in a task was either inadvertently rewarded, or was not called upon by Trump to explain or excuse their unethical action.

The Apprentice opened a door to the inner workings of the Trump organization that was unprecedented. The show provided its viewers with a window to the inside machinations of a corporate mogul's life, or at least what the producers wanted the viewers to see. By allowing cameras into Trump's world, the viewer's were able to draw conclusions about big business in America (Tressler, 2006). Some of the business lessons to be gleaned were from the short asides that Trump gave during the episodes, referred by Kinnick and Parton, (2005) as "Trumpisms" (p. 435). These asides revealed some of

Trump's business philosophies (see Appendix D). The Trumpisms usually addressed a business lesson with respect to the folly of a contestant or team for that particular episode.

The program was represented as an authoritative text as demonstrated by Trump's business tenets in action. The underlying assumption was that *The Apprentice* was presenting authentic solutions to authentic business problems, and was an established authority on best business practices. *The Apprentice* amounted to business propaganda and attempted to sway the viewers to believe Trump's tenets about life and business.

Trump was positioned as authority/master/star throughout the series. Of course, this is based on Trump's legendary status and notoriety in the real estate industry, high profile properties, his books and business education ventures. Trump touts owning more than one hundred companies, and is presented as a benchmark for success. Trump is King in this paradigm whether touting himself, his own or others products, or defining corporate business in America. His influence is undeniable in not only corporate America, but also in the art of self-promotion. He and the program both support the hegemony of capitalism, as money and power through business prowess is an end goal. *The Apprentice* producers were able to build on that reputation even further and cash in on the construction of reality.

RQ3: How does The Apprentice portray reality?

The manipulation of televised content is common, but becomes extremely problematic when the text is that of RTV programming. In general, RTV realism is ambiguous and collapses the boundaries between the real and unreal (Hall, 2006). The "real" presented in RTV is not "reality" at all. *The Apprentice* manipulated elements in

many ways in the series. In fact, with this level of manipulation, the televised content in *The Apprentice* results in a total packaged “manufactured reality.”

Productions teams are able to manipulate many elements of programs. In the case of *The Apprentice*, there is manipulation at the outset of casting for the program. The producers have a set of criterion that is used to select participants from thousands of applicants that apply to appear on the series. Upon examination of the long form questionnaire (see Appendix G) for the program, it is evident by the questioning that they are looking for a certain type of contestant, generally one that can drive the drama inherent in RTV programming. That is not to say that all of the contestants conform to that ideal to provide maximum drama. At times, those contestants that are the most “stable” produce inherent drama when interfacing with the others that aren’t as stable.

False perceptions could also be created and character creation of contestants was possible. Contestants such as Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth was exploited and crafted to be an “ultimate bitch.” *The Apprentice* utilized her character to produce drama for the program. Contestant Raj Bhakta was painted as the “ultimate hound,” constantly pursuing women. Contestant Sam Solovey was painted as a “nut case.” Jennifer Massey was painted as a “cold ice princess.”

The program’s timeline is presented as a fifteen to eighteen week ordeal, which in actuality is only four to six weeks for the production time. The contestants are pushed harder than it appears on television. Production keeps the contestants on a frenetic schedule in order to make them tired and more prone to drama-filled situations. Many of the contestants complain openly about the lack of sleep. Production also controls the food that is delivered to the contestants. In one case, food was withheld but alcoholic

beverages were available. This was an obvious attempt by production to allow for the intoxication of the contestants, again setting the stage for maximum drama.

Production is able to control the entire environment that the contestants operate within. The “penthouse” is actually a mock-up in Trump Towers, with the mock-up boardroom on the same floor. The living quarters are set up in such a way that there is little privacy and all of the facilities are unisex. The common areas of the penthouse are set up fairly luxuriously and on occasion, production would provide upscale food and drink, such as Dom Perignon champagne. The crew is unseen by the audience, but clearly interacts with the contestants. It is highly possible for the production staff and crew to manipulate dialogue, sequences of events and contrived acts. All of this can also be done through editing of the footage. The episodes can be crafted to conform to what the production team is seeking.

The ambiguity settles out in this way: The eighteen “real” candidates are placed in an “unreal” environment to play an “unreal” game through a series of staged tasks, with task selection influenced by the respective sponsor of an episode. The staged task requires “real” skill from the contestants, and the contestants become part of the “real” marketing that is employed in the program. Through discourse and events, the “real” and “unreal” actions occur. The boardroom drama occurs in an “unreal” space that culminates in a staged finale. This all leads to a “real” contestant that is awarded a “real” position (albeit it potentially not the same position that was selected at the finale) within the “real” Trump organization. The importance of all of the ambiguity between the real and unreal, lies in the fact that the viewers gather information based on the unreal, that can lead to potential processes of thought, action or to affect the viewers’ belief system. The viewers

are exposed to manufactured realism as it rolls out in an episodic form on their televisions.

RQ4: What social commentary is present in The Apprentice?

The media both reflects and creates our social reality, reflecting that which is already present and works to support hegemony in society, and to preserve what society already believes. In maintaining the status quo, consumers of these messages are taught not to question what has been set forth, reducing the opportunity for potential growth through knowledge. With the pervasiveness of both television and RTV programming, the messages become that much more salient. As *The Apprentice* supported hegemonic ideals of consumerism and capitalism, it also supported hegemonic social constructs. Social representations are powerful statements especially when derived from a popular culture product such as a RTV product.

There was little diversity since diversity, by and large, does not serve the commercial interests of *The Apprentice* program. *The Apprentice* compartmentalized and packaged any type of diversity that did exist. This packaging resulted in turning diversity into a commodity, or commodification. that the show could not only use, but also use to marginalize diversity. *The Apprentice* exhibited commodification of gender, race, sexual orientation and sexuality. This was an easy short-hand way for *The Apprentice* to create mainstream material for a mostly White audience. *The Apprentice* employed the short-hand technique of defining diversity but also reinforcing social stereotypes. It is common for television programs use this technique that effectively maintains social hegemony.

While there was some ethnic and cultural diversity, the overwhelming majority of the contestants that appeared in the six seasons were White Americans in their twenties.

Approximately, one fourth of the one hundred contestants were non-White or of a diverse ethnic or cultural type. The only winner of *The Apprentice* that was ethnically diverse was Randall Pinkett, a Black contestant in Season Four. Sean Yazbeck was the only non-American winner. Yazbeck is British, with a diverse cultural background that arose from an Irish mother and Lebanese father. Some of the contestants may have had a multiple-ethnic heritage, but the information that was gathered only reflect those contestants that racial diversity was obvious or if the contestants themselves discussed their ethnic background within the context of the series.

With the series having a lack of racial diversity, it was easy for the producers to rely on racial stereotyping. With little ethnic diversity within an audience, the audience is generally rendered very homogenous. The use of stereotyping is met with little resistance and there is little to no backlash against the program. By using supporting discourse in a circular construct, the series easily sells its narrow view of racial diversity, marginalizing it as well. The series co-opted racial identities to form a package of “reality” to sell to audiences. Portraying ethnic representations in this way can lead to commodification of certain ethnic groups. Black, urban stereotyping was present throughout the series and was marginalized, but also co-opted by the series as being treating as a “bling-bling, gansta’ culture.”

There was a co-opting of the Jewish faith as well. Jewish contestants were found to be respected and there was a portrayal of the importance of their religion. There is a pervasive number of those of the Jewish faith in the entertainment industry which could explain this phenomenon. Little representation of any other faith was presented. Additionally, the program was quick to showcase when other contestants maligned

Jewish contestants or used any unflattering characterization of the Jewish faith or Jewish people. In the case of contestant Jennifer Crisafulli, she was fired because of her anti-Semitic comments.

RTV in general reinforce a social construction of gender-specific behavior. Following suit, *The Apprentice* reinforces common social narratives on gender. This is shown with images, situations and dialogue in the episodes. Gender representations followed the mainstream hegemonic flow. Female contestants were often seen as not only sex objects but also weak, and not true contenders in both the game and in the world of business. They are painted as being ill-equipped and at times, emotional. Women contestants were often seen as eye candy, a bitch, a vixen, or a villain. Women contestants were shown using sexuality to advance themselves or their teams in the competition tasks. The message? Do whatever it takes to get the sale or win the task. Many times, the women contestants were shown in-fighting and dysfunctional, signaling the gender script of women having problems with the group dynamic and cat-fighting instead of working together to accomplish the job at hand.

The more beautiful women were usually treated better by Trump. Trump had on screen affection for some of the women and he would flirt with them openly on camera. Most of these contestants used his flirting/affection to their advantage. Trump's message: Women must be young, thin, and attractive to succeed in life and business.

The male contestants on the other hand were usually painted as strong, opinionated men. The social narrative of male vibrato was present, and male superiority was voiced through dialogue. The men often exhibited male prowess using cursing, sexual dialogue, chauvinism, and exhibition of and the objectification of women. The

men were usually shown working well as a group, and were painted as being powerful and well-suited for the business world.

Provocative topics are always a good sell in RTV programming. The American culture has proven time and time again that the salacious sells. *The Apprentice* used this to their advantage and often focused on sex and sexual innuendo. The program is replete with these messages. One area of this manifested in the interest of creating or exploiting “showmances.” Trump would blindside contestants and pry into their personal affairs with regard to the showmances between contestants. He would often make lengthy commentary about the relationships, and the camera was sure to get footage of romantic moments shared by the couple involved in the showmance

In the case of one’s sexual preference, anything other than heterosexuality was maligned and marginalized. While there was no mention or depiction of lesbians in the series, stereotyping of homosexual men was present. This was often displayed by the way Trump treated the male homosexual contestants. Unkind or snide remarks were also made by other male contestants about the gay men in the group, or comments used by male contestants to demean one another.

As part of his success, Trump flaunts his luxury life and being a part of the American Dream throughout the series. Trump, who embraces wealth, also embraces a stratified social and economic system. His lifestyle is indicative of one that has little interest in the subject of social equality in the United States. With idealized images of wealth, including Trump’s private jets, private helicopters, yachts, elaborate penthouse apartments, and other objects of luxury living, there is no doubt that *The Apprentice* encourages a “luxé” lifestyle.

Trump purports that through great business prowess one can reach the heights of a luxe lifestyle. Opulent rewards are given to the winning team members. The contestants are taken in by this illusion of a luxe life, but also viewers can be deceived and result in a potential belief that following Trump's advice and business tenets can actually offer a short-cut to true upward mobility. At times, Trump waxes poetically about the American Dream in his rhetoric in the series and his belief that the game delivers opportunity for entrepreneurship and access to the American Dream. Trump's portrayal of the American Dream refers to the materialistic, self-interest pursuit of wealth (Fisher, 1973). *The Apprentice* is propaganda in every sense, attempting to sway the contestants and the viewers to believe Trump's tenets about life and business.

This free entertainment comes at a price; that price may just be the hi-jacking of the belief system of its viewers. All of these elements work in concert to create a living soap opera, which is manufactured, but appears to be real. Through editing and other techniques, the production team creates the elements that embody and define the program. As the images roll for the viewing audience, what appears becomes "the truth" and bolsters social narratives; this may be internalized by viewers as fact. This can lead to *The Apprentice* becoming televisual discourse as "equipment for living" and being used as a life guide to lessons and expectations.

Limitations

The recordings of the episodes of *The Apprentice* does not contain the original spot commercials that aired with the episodes. Firsthand account notes were taken during some of the episodes as they originally aired. It would have been preferable in this study to have analyzed all commercials intact, along with other promotional program material.

It is also impossible to recreate the natural time and environment that *The Apprentice* was originally broadcast in. The episodes were viewed between the years of 2004-2006; however, this particular project had not yet been conceived and therefore no coding took place at that time.

“Sweeps weeks” had the potential to skew the information contained in *The Apprentice* episodes. During the four ratings periods (November, February, May, and July), Nielsen captures a national sample of viewership, in order to set advertising rates. Producers of television shows try to sensationalize their programs with outrageous plot lines and guest stars to drive the ratings higher during these crucial periods. If ratings are good, they can charge more for advertising. The nature of this project made it impossible to train coders as all material required a firsthand account to capture the qualitative milieus of the program. Also due to the nature of this project, solid statistical data could not be generated from the qualitative research. Therefore, these results are not generalizable to the population of RTV programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

As the U.S. economy heads toward the ever-increasing reliability on the “entertainment economy,” scholars should continue to grow their research of popular culture entertainment texts. The rapid pace makes it difficult to take a breath and apply critical angles, but scholars must remain vigilant as to the ever-changing field of communication and its affect on communication texts.

While completing this project, a bid was launched to become a candidate on the new *Apprentice* series. Some of the preliminary stages were achieved, but in the end, final selection did not occur. If a researcher could be selected for the cast of *The*

Apprentice, the experience would provide a wealth of inside information. This information could be combined with the qualitative data that has been presented in this study, or used in combination with any other *Apprentice* study.

The genre of RTV continues to grow as network budgets get squeezed tighter and tighter. There are few RTV programs that are based on the topic of business, so there is room for growth in this RTV sub-genre. With the economy on a slippery slope and unprecedented economic hardship for many, Trump has taken the opportunity to revive the non-celebrity *Apprentice* series to give contestants an opportunity to work in his organization. The series has cast people that have recently graduated from a university or business school, those that have lost a career due to the economy, and those that are working in jobs that they are greatly over-qualified for. The hook is timely with high unemployment numbers present in the U.S. Executive producers are attempting to hook viewers on the stories of the down-trodden contestants, and present, at least to one lucky contestant, a position within the Trump organization.

There is a four year gap between *The Apprentice* Season Six and the next non-celebrity installment of this series. The differences could be quite substantial in the new version since the premise is quite varied from Season One through Season Six. There will be a new opportunity for researchers to compare the original six seasons to the new season(s) and to tease out new themes. Early indications are that the executive producers are still using product/brand placement. With this, there is an opportunity for researchers to compare, four years later, the ways in which the new series uses product/brand placement and the possible changes that have occurred in the use of the technique. There could be new types of material to examine such as the use of social media by the network

and producers. Researchers could compare and contrast the social messages contained in the first set of the series to that of the second. New social message phenomenon may be present within the new series.

The Apprentice would provide an appropriate case study for a marketing communications class, as it is an innovator in the use of RTV programming, sponsorship, and brand/product placement. While Trump is certainly not an expert on business theory and practice, his business lessons can be useful in a business class, some of which could include lead to lessons on business ethics. While *The Apprentice* franchise has gone international, the breadth of this study only encompassed the U.S. version. Studies that take place in the future could consider comparing and contrasting the international versions. A mixed method approach could be employed using not only qualitative data but also quantitative data such as a content analysis.

Final Comments

Although RTV programming is inexpensive, networks are still looking for proven material. To fill this need, many producers have begun launching Webisodes of new RTV concept programs. Companies such as Long Story Short Productions, responsible for RTV programs such as *Blind Date* and *The Osbournes*, have been quietly using this technique. Their idea is to use the Internet as a testing ground for television pilots. The producers for the company believe that the Internet is a viable entity to test, launch and sell media projects. Once the company can produce a viable number of episodes and viewers, they approach television network executives to sell the television project. So it seems that the RTV programming model can become even more efficient and thereby save the networks additional money (“The World’s Billionaires,” 2010).

On a related note, a series of commercials began to run on television in the summer of 2010, sponsored by the Discovery Network. It speaks not only to the reflexivity of the RTV genre, but also speaks to the practice of combining RTV and marketing. One commercial that has aired on the Travel Channel network (owned by the Discovery Network) featured the RTV players, the Hillstrand brothers and their fishing vessel, the *Time Bandit*. Amongst RTV viewers, the Hillstrand brothers are known from the program that they appear in, *The Deadliest Catch*, also produced by the Discovery Network. In the commercial, they two brothers are shown waiting on the deck of their crab boat, in which all mise-en-scene matches *The Deadliest Catch* RTV program, i.e., the dock, the boat, the location, the atmosphere, and the manner they are dressed. They are apparently awaiting the arrival of a crew member as they look down and check their watches. As the men catch sight of someone rounding the corner of the dock, surprisingly the crew member is the long-term recurring Caveman character from the Geico television commercials. The brothers are not only surprised by the caveman's arrival, but also by the fact that he has arrived with a set of designer yellow luggage. The brothers stare in amazement, look at each other disapprovingly, and the caveman asks them to watch his luggage while he retrieves a cappuccino that he has left behind. While obviously humorous, the salience for this discussion is the continued blending of RTV programming and commercial sponsors. This example shows the practice will likely continue as the blending becomes even more creative, more entertaining, and more palatable to the viewing audience.

Finally, the merging of news, television, music, films, shopping, the Internet and social interaction will likely continue its present trajectory. Eventually one will be able to

watch a television program, mouse over a character to get shopping information on an outfit, go to the store to buy it, while a geo-tracking device lets one's social network know where they are shopping and what they are buying. One can take a picture, include a short message, and show their social network what they have just purchased. For ill or for good, society will be uber-connected in every way possible, with marketing practices hi-jacking any opportunity to gain buying favor with the public. The most powerful view of the future is that of a total integration paradigm, as the demarcation lines blur between art and commerce, entertainment and advertising, and reality and manufactured reality.

APPENDIX A

DAIRY QUEEN BLIZZARD APPRENTICE PROMOTIONAL TIE-IN,
IN-STORE MATERIAL.

Cebrzynski, G. (2005, Oct. 10). Dairy Queen to hire Apprentice in promo for
“Apprentice” tie-in. *Nation's Restaurant News*, 39(41), 4-113.



APPENDIX B

STAPLES THE DESK *APPRENTICE* PRODUCT

http://www99.epinions.com/review/Staples_The_Desk_Apprentice_Rotating_Desk_Organizer/content_192352063108



APPENDIX C

THE APPRENTICE PRODUCT TABLES

The Apprentice – Season 1

EPISODE	EPISODE TITLE	DATE	SPONSORS/ORGANIZATIONS (PRIMARY)	PRODUCTS
1 – 1	Meet the Billionaire	1/08/04	Trump Organization	Showcase of Trump Properties
1 – 2	Sex, Lies & Altitude	1/15/04	NetJets Deutsch, Inc.	Marquis Jet Card Advertising Firm
1 – 3	Respect	1/22/04	No Sponsor	=====
1 – 4	Ethics Schmethics	1/29/04	Planet Hollywood Trump National Golf Club	Restaurants Golf Club
1 – 5	Trading Places	2/05/04	N.Y. Yankees	Yankee Stadium
1 – 6	Tit for Tat	2/12/04	Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation NBC	Sotheby's Benefit Auction Program Celebrities
1 – 7	Dupe-Lex	2/19/04	Trump Organization	Trump Park Avenue
1 – 8	Ice Capades	2/26/04	Trump Organization	Trump Ice (bottled water)
1 – 9	DNA, Heads & the Undead Kitty	3/04/04	No Sponsor	=====
1 – 10	Wheeling & Dealing	3/11/04	No Sponsor	=====
1 – 11	Circus, Circus	3/25/04	Trump Organization Chrysler	Trump Taj Mahal Resort & Casino Crossfire
1 – 12	The Price is Height	4/01/04	Trump Organization	Trump World Tower & Trump Mar-A-Lago
1 – 13	Down to the Wire	4/08/04	Hearst Communications Trump Organization	Esquire Trump National Golf Club & Trump Taj Mahal Resort & Casino
1 – 14	Season Finale	4/15/04	Chrysler-Trump Golf Tournament Jessica Simpson Concert Operation Smile Ike Austin Diabetes Foundation Chrysler	Tournament Concert Charity Charity Crossfire

The Apprentice – Season 2

EPISODE	EPISODE TITLE	DATE	SPONSORS/ORGANIZATIONS (PRIMARY)	PRODUCTS
2 – 1	Toying with Disaster	9/09/04	Mattel	Transformers Tyco RC
2 – 2	Scoop Dreams	9/16/04	Ciao Bella Gelato	Gelato
2 – 3	Send in the Crowns	9/23/04	Proctor & Gamble	Crest Toothpaste
2 – 4	The Last Supper	9/29/04	Zagat Survey	Survey
2 – 5	Lights! Camera! Transaction!	10/07/04	QVC Television Network	TV Programming
2 – 6	Crimes of Fashion	10/14/04	Avon Fall Fashion Show Trump Organization	Fashion Show Trump Model Management
2 – 7	Barking up the Wrong Tree	10/21/04	No Sponsor	=====
2 – 8	A Tale of Two Leaders	10/28/04	New York Police Department Deutsch, Inc.	Advertising Firm
2 – 9	Bringing Down the House	11/04/04	No Sponsor	=====
2 – 10	Runaway Pride	11/11/04	No Sponsor	=====
2 – 11	The Butt Stops Here	11/18/04	Levi's	Perfect Fit Jeans
2 – 12	The Pepsi Challenged	11/25/04	Pepsi	Pepsi Edge
2 – 13	Sweet & Lowdown	12/02/04	M&M Mars	M-Azing Candy Bar
2 – 14	Intellectual Horsepower	12/09/04	Unilever Pepsi-Cola North America Bear Stearns New England Patriots	=====
2 – 15	Final Task/Finale	12/16/04	NBA "Read to Achieve" Alzheimer's Association Genworth Trump Polo Cup Genworth Charity Basketball Classic	Charity Charity Tournament Tournament

The Apprentice – Season 3

EPISODE	EPISODE TITLE	DATE	SPONSORS/ORGANIZATIONS (PRIMARY)	PRODUCTS
3 – 1	Whopper 101	1/20/05	Burger King	Angus Steak Burger
3 – 2	Motel 666	1/27/05	Yahoo!	Yahoo! Local Motel
3 – 3	Trouble Is Brewing	2/03/05	Nestle	Nescafe Taster's Choice
3 – 4	Soap Dopes	2/10/05	Unilever Deutsch, Inc.	Dove Cool Moisture Body Wash Advertising Firm
3 – 5	Airstream of Consciousness	2/17/05	Airstream	Trailer
3 – 6	The Writing on the Wall	2/24/05	Sony Playstation 2	Gran Turismo 4
3 – 7	Project Putt Putt	3/03/05	Trump Organization	Golf Division
3 – 8	Bling It On	3/10/05	FUSE TV Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation	Cable TV Channel Charity
3 – 9	Pandora's Box	3/24/05	Home Depot	Do-It-Yourself Clinic
3 – 10	The Pie's the Limit	3/31/05	Domino's Pizza	Pizza
3 – 11	Seams Stress	4/07/05	American Eagle Outfitters Visa Best Buy	Clothing Credit Card Electronics
3 – 12	A Lonely Drive	4/14/05	General Motors	Pontiac Solstice
3 – 13	I Can't Believe It's Not Clutter	4/21/05	Staples	Office Supplies
3 – 14	Bedazzled by a Beefy T	4/28/05	Gap Inc. Scoop	T-Shirts Retail Store
3 – 15	The Games People Play	5/05/05	Domino's QVC Prudential Real Estate	=====
3 – 16	The Final Task/Finale	5/12/05	Burger King N.Y. 2012 Olympics Board Sony Best Buy Electronic Arts Sports Division	N.Y. 2012 Athlete Challenge Sony Playstation Best Buy Fight Night Promotion
3 – 17	The Final Task/Finale pt. 2	5/19/05	Same	Same

The Apprentice – Season 4

EPISODE	EPISODE TITLE	DATE	SPONSORS/ORGANIZATIONS (PRIMARY)	PRODUCTS
4 – 1	Let's Get Physical	9/22/05	Bally Total Fitness	Fitness Plus
4 – 2	There's No Little "i" In Team	9/29/05	Lamborghini Kaplan Thaler Group	Car Ad Agency
4 – 3	Something Old, Something New	10/06/05	Best Buy	TiVo & other electronics
4 – 4	Ice Cream of Genie	10/13/05	Dairy Queen	Dairy Queen Blizzard
4 – 5	Lost in Space	10/20/05	Sony Pictures	Zathura
4 – 6	Take Me Out to the Boardroom	10/27/05	Dick's Sporting Goods	Sporting Goods
4 – 7	Back to School	11/03/05	The Learning Annex	Educational Classes
4 – 8	Store Wars	11/10/05	Lucasfilm Best Buy	Star Wars-Revenge of the Sith DVD Star Wars Game-Battlefront II Store display for the two
4 – 9	One Hit Blunder	11/17/05	XM Radio	XM Radio Café Channel
4 – 10	Shaniagans	11/24/05	Coty, Inc.	Shania by Stetson Fragrance
4 – 11	To Lead or Not To Lead	12/01/05	Microsoft	Microsoft's Live Meeting
4 – 12	The Final Showdown	12/08/05	Yahoo! Outback Steakhouse Glaser Pediatric Aids Foundation Autism Speaks	Yahoo! All-Star Comedy Benefit Outback VIP Softball Challenge Charity Charity
4 – 13	The Finale	12/15/05	Same	Same

The Apprentice – Season 5

EPISODE	EPISODE TITLE	DATE	SPONSORS/ORGANIZATIONS (PRIMARY)	PRODUCTS
5 – 1	Summer of Sam's	2/27/06	Sam's Club Goodyear	Sam's Club Membership Blmp
5 – 2	The Razor's Edge	3/06/06	Proctor & Gamble	Gillette Fusion Razor
5 – 3	Get It In Gear	3/13/06	General Motors	Chevrolet Tahoe
5 – 4	Cereal Killer	3/20/06	Post	Grape Nuts Trail Mix Cereal
5 – 5	Cruise Control	3/27/06	Norwegian Cruise Lines	Free Style Cruising
5 – 6	King of the Jingle	4/03/06	Arby's	Chicken Naturals
5 – 7	It's More Than Decor	4/10/06	Ace Hardware Toys R Us Make a Wish Foundation	Hardware Toys Charity
5 – 8	A Slice of Heaven	4/10/06	7 Eleven	P'Eatzza
5 – 9	Assault on Battery	4/24/06	Ameriquest Ellis Island	Souvenir Program Ellis Island Foundation
5 – 10	Blow Out	5/01/06	The Hair Cuttery	Hair Salon Services
5 – 11	Back To School	5/08/06	Outback Steakhouse Rutgers University	Tailgate Steak Dinners Homecoming Game
5 – 12	Backs Against the Wal-Mart	5/15/06	Microsoft Wal-Mart	Xbox 360 Electronics
5 – 13	Who Wears the Pants?	5/22/06	Embassy Suites Hotels	Hotel Services
5 – 14	The Final Task	5/29/06	Pontiac Leary Firefighters Foundation Barenaked Ladies World Wildlife Fund Trump Taj Mahal	Automobiles Charity Music Concert Charity Hotel & Casino
5 – 15	The Finale	6/05/06	Same	Same

The Apprentice – Season 6

EPISODE	EPISODE TITLE	DATE	SPONSORS/ORGANIZATIONS (PRIMARY)	PRODUCTS
6 – 1	California Car Wash	1/07/07	=====	=====
6 – 2	Pink is the New Black	1/14/07	Trina Turk	Swimsuits
6 – 3	Hollywood Walk of Shame	1/21/07	Starline Tours of Hollywood Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel L.A. Laker Girls	Tour Luxury Hotel Squad Appearance
6 – 4	Drive-Thru Duel	1/28/07	El Pollo Loco	QSR
6 – 5	To Bee or Not To Bee	2/11/07	Sue Bee Honey Ralph's Supermarket	Honey Grocery Store
6 – 6	Travel Sweepstakes Smackdown	2/18/07	Priceline.com Westfield MainPlace	Travel Sweepstakes Shopping Mall
6 – 7	Life in the Luxury Lane	3/04/07	Lexus	LS 460
6 – 8	Bend It Like Donald	3/11/07	GNC Los Angeles Galaxy Soccer	Nutritional Supplements Soccer Team
6 – 9	Soap Gets In Your Eyes	3/18/07	Dial Soap Passions	Soft Scrub Deep Clean NBC Soap Opera
6 – 10	Girls on Rollerskates	3/25/07	Universal Studios Hollywood Adwalker	Season Pass Mobile POS system
6 – 11	Shut Your Smartmouth	4/01/07	Smartmouth I.A Times	Mouthwash Newspaper
6 – 12	Las Vegas, Baby!	4/08/07	Trump Organization	Trump Tower Las Vegas
6 – 13	The Final Task	4/15/07	Dial Soap	Renuzit Air Freshener
6 – 14	The Finale	4/22/07	Dial Soap Hollywood Bowl	Renuzit Air Freshener Vcnuc

APPENDIX D

TRUMPISMS

Location, Location, Location

- “I have always felt that location is important, but the people behind the deal are much more important than location. I’d much rather have a really smart talented guy doing a deal in a not so good location than an idiot doing a deal in a great location, because you will make money every time.”

Don’t Negotiate with Underlings

- “Making deals can be tough. I learned at a young age that you have to deal with the boss. It’s very simple; deal with the boss whenever possible.”

The Art of the Deal

- “Negotiating is a very, very delicate art. Sometimes you have to be tough, sometimes you have to be as sweet as pie – you never know, it depends on who you are dealing with. I’ve often said that negotiating is not really learned, it is almost innate, in the genes. A negotiator is born.”

A Deal’s a Deal

- “Once you make a deal with someone, you must carry it through. You start to develop a wrong reputation and it is impossible to make future deals. Once you shake hands, that should be it.”

Stand Up for Yourself

- “You’ve always got to stand up for yourself. You just have to fight for yourself because basically nobody else is going to fight for you.”

Know What You are Up Against

- “Negotiation is a very, very delicate art. The big thing in negotiation is to try and figure out your opponent, otherwise, you are going to look like an idiot, and loose big.”

God Is In the Details

- “Many times you hear the expression that “God is in the details.” When people come in to buy something, especially very rich people, they see details; if something’s wrong they see it and it reflects in the price. That’s why I am up early in the morning to check every detail of my construction sites. It’s a little like watching someone sell a used car and not wash it. You can spend \$10 washing the car and get another \$200 for the car. And I’ve seen guys that are selling cars that are dirty, and I say, “That guy is a loser.”

Beggars Can’t Be Choosers

- “Never beg when you are trying to sell something. If it doesn’t work out, take your lumps and relax, but you’ll never sell through the begging route.”

Be Respected

- “The word leadership is always hard to define because you see so many people that are so different and they are great leaders. But the quality that I have seen that is common to all is respect. People have to respect you or you cannot be a leader.”

Price is Right

- “The marketplace is totally brilliant. If you price something a little bit high, all of a sudden they don’t buy. If you price it a little bit low, the marketplace just comes and eats it alive. You have to find the right price, and if you don’t, big trouble.”

Know your Market

- “When I build a building or when I build a golf course or a club or whatever I do, you always have to go after a certain audience. You have to be able to pinpoint the market, if you can’t pinpoint the market, you won’t be successful.”

Sell Your Ideas

- “If you think an idea is really good, then just don’t stop, go after it, keep selling it because some of the greatest ideas were ideas that nobody wanted.”

You Have to Love It

- “To represent Donald Trump and the Trump organization, somebody has to be driven. But maybe more important than anything they have to love it; if they don’t love it, they will never, ever be successful. Once they love it, and once I can see they enjoy what they’re doing, and they’ve got the talent to do it, they can’t stop.”

Control Your Contractor

- “Contractors are a different breed. They are smart, didn’t go to Harvard or Wharton, but they are just as smart as anybody that went there. You have to know how to deal with contractors, and you have to be tough, because they will pick your pockets and you won’t even know what happened.”

Believe in Yourself

- “If you don’t have a positive attitude in business and in life, you will never ever be successful.”

Never Lose Your Cool

- “You should never lose your cool, unless it’s an act; if you’re acting angry because you want to scare your employees or you want to do something to get them to work harder. Never lose your cool, unless you have a reason for doing so.”

Form Your Own Opinion

- “I’m a leader that listens to my team, and listens intently, but in the end, I form my own opinion. The leader that wants to be popular, that wants to be loved, that leader, ultimately, is not going to make it.”

Know Your Enemy

- “Often times you’ll see an opponent and you’ll say to yourself, ‘This is going to be easy.’ That’s the worst thing that you can do. Never underestimate your opponent. Assume that your opponent is the toughest, smartest person in the world, because that can really lead to victory.”

Winning is Everything

- “There is no better feeling than being a winner. To be a winner, you have to think like a winner. You have to be positive, and you cannot stop.”

Perseverance

- “The best people are the ones that don’t stop until the sale is made. They never give up, they have no quit.”

Respect Comes From Winning

- “If you win, people are going to respect you. Vince Lombardi was a little guy; he used to smack around these giant football players and they’d cry. The reason he got away with it was because he just won.”

Lead with Authority

- “I rarely see a leader that has been able to lead by consensus. A leader is often times someone who goes against everybody, that’s what a leader is. Generally speaking, a leader has to think independently.”

Never Settle

- “People settle for mediocrity for one reason, they’re lazy. I’ve seen it so often. People go into something, they don’t want to go the extra step, they know it’s not going to great, it might be good, it might be OK, and it’s not going to be great. They settle for mediocrity, they’re lazy.”

Instinct

- “I always felt that my best deals were made with my instinct; not anything else, with my instinct.”

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

- “Never get sidetracked by less important tasks. Always focus on the goal. If you do get sidetracked, get right back on the rails, because ultimately sidetracking kills you.”

Can't We All Just Get Along?

- “Getting along with people is very important to success. If you are not going to get along with people, you may be successful, but it's going to be a lot harder.”

Be Flexible

- “In business it is important to adapt. And if you don't adapt, you are never going to be good at business, never going to be successful. Show flexibility; be able to make a change.”

Inspire

- “Leadership is very important in business. You have to inspire your staff; you have to really make them respect you.”

Maximize Potential

- “A good leader has to be able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of employees. The leader has to be able to see who is really strong where and if they don't do it it won't work out well for that leader or the company.”

Money Matters

- “Money is important for many reasons. It is a scorecard: How well did I do? How much did I make? How much did the company make? You can do a lot of things, but in business, it is all about money.”

Take It To the Limit

- “A successful team has to challenge each other. Push your teammates to be better performers. Just keep pushing them, and pushing them. You don't want to drive them over the edge, but push them as far as you can.”

Get To the Point

- “When I have a meeting, I don't waste time. It's quick, short, to the point, and we don't play games. There are only so many hours in the day; the quicker you are, the more you can get done.”

Plan B

- "I've seen many people over the years that are highly inflexible, they have a straight line, but a lot of times that line has to change. And if you don't have a Plan B, it's just not going to work. You need flexibility or you're never, ever going to be successful."

Keep it Simple, Stupid!

- "In advertising you want to keep your message to the point and simple. When you make it too detailed, too complex it goes over the head of the people that you want to hear the message."

Listen to Your People

- "A really great leader, no matter how tough, no matter how smart, will always have an ability to listen to smart people that work for them. There are so many great ideas that can come out of your subordinates. Hire smart people then listen to them."

Command Respect

- "You need the respect of your employees. If you are not going to lead, and if you are not going to have their respect, it's over; give it up, go out and get a job."

Be Decisive

- "If you are not decisive, the people that are supposed to be following you are going to say 'he doesn't know how to lead. At the same time, you do not want to be so quick that you make a mistake.'"

Know Your Customer

- "Learn your customer, know your customer; it's a good road to success."

All In the Family

- "Many people have priorities; in some cases its family, in some cases it's business. Have priorities; if you have family, love it; if you have a business, love it, but there is room for other things. So you can have a great family, and also do a great job at business; try getting them all in there."

APPENDIX E

FHM MAGAZINE (MAY 2004) PICTORIAL OF WOMEN FROM *THE APPRENTICE*

SEASON ONE

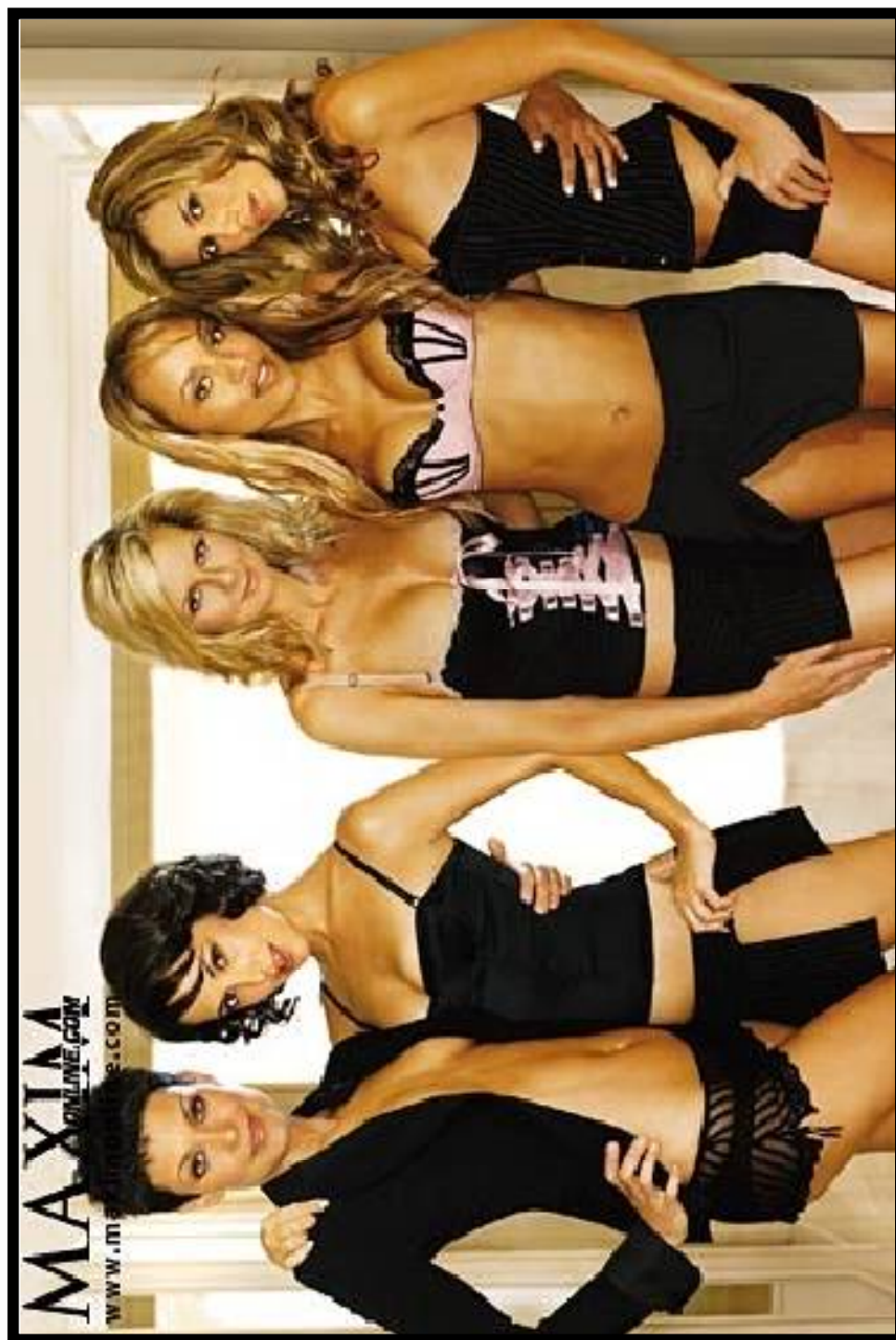
<http://www.adrants.com/2004/04/the-babes-of-the-apprentice-hit-fhm.php>



APPENDIX F

MAXIM.COM (2004) INTERNET PICTORIAL OF WOMEN FROM
THE APPRENTICE SEASON TWO

<http://img130.exs.cx/img130/1695/SKS-MXM-Dec-2004-Apprentices-001.jpg>



APPENDIX G

THE APPRENTICE LONG QUESTIONNAIRE

What's the BEST job you've ever had? Why? _____

What's the WORST job you've ever had? Why? _____

What is the most impressive thing you've ever done at a job or school? _____

Have you ever been fired or laid off from a job(s)? Explain. _____

School(s) Attended & Degree(s) Completed: _____

Why did you choose that school and degree program? _____

What's the most important lesson you've ever learned? _____

Provide an example that shows your level of competitiveness. _____

Page 2 of 9

A10

LONG QUESTIONNAIRE

THE APPRENTICE

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone #': Home: _____ Cell: _____

Work: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

I am a legal resident of the United States. YES / NO (circle one)

Current Occupation/Place of Employment/Yearly Salary: _____

How do you feel about your current job? _____

What is your dream job? Why aren't you doing it (or are you)? _____

Past Occupation/Place of Employment/Yearly Salary: _____

How has the recession affected you professionally? _____

How has the recession affected you personally? _____

Page 1 of 9

What was your favorite game as a child? ... as an adult? Why?

How do you react when you lose?

How do you react when you win?

How important is money to you?

Where did you grow up and how did it influence you?

Describe the most important person in your life. Are you in a serious romantic relationship? If not, why?

If applicable, please list your children's names and ages.

How are you different now than you were five years ago?

How are you different now than you were ten years ago?

What's the most important thing in the world to you?

Page 3 of 9

Describe your most embarrassing moment or experience.

Describe your most disappointing moment.

How would someone who really knows you describe your best qualities?

How would someone who really knows you describe your worst qualities?

What does success mean to you?

What types of people intimidate you?

How do you blow off steam?

Why do you want to be a participant on The Apprentice?

What assets do you bring to The Apprentice? Why do you think you'll win?

Describe yourself in one sentence.

Page 4 of 9

List any organizations or clubs you belong to: _____

List any special talents/interesting hobbies: _____

Favorite TV show: _____ Favorite movie: _____

Favorite book: _____ Favorite magazine: _____

Favorite celeb: _____ Favorite athlete: _____

SIZES: DRESS: _____ SHIRT: _____ PANTS: _____ SHOE: _____

RING: _____ HAT: _____ HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____

Are you or have you ever been a professional performer in any film or television program? _____

List all TV film appearances: _____

What other reality/game TV shows have you been on? _____

List any other reality/game TV shows that are currently considering you: _____

List any/all websites you have ever appeared on, currently or in the past: _____

List your 3 closest friends/family members that we could call as character references, name & phone #:(s):

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If chosen to be on the program, is there any person or part of your life that you would prefer NOT to share on camera? (i.e. social organizations, activities, personal history, friends, family, etc.) YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

What is the closest airport to your home? _____

Are you available to commit up to 6 weeks if necessary in May/June/July 2010? _____

PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION HONESTLY

Have you ever hit anyone in anger or self-defense? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Have you ever been arrested or had a restraining order placed against you? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Are you now, or have you ever seen a therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Have you ever been treated for any serious physical illness or any mental illness(es) or had any serious injuries? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Do you regularly take any prescription medication? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Do you have any allergies? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Do you have any physical conditions, special needs, or fears that we should know about? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Have you ever been charged with a violent offense or a felony? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a violent offense or a felony? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

Have you ever been party to a lawsuit? YES / NO (circle one) If so, explain: _____

RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

This application is for casting of a reality-based television show whose purpose is entertainment. The following eligibility requirements must be met in order to proceed with the application process.

- I. You must be legally eligible to work in the United States and live in the United States. Proof of such eligibility must be provided to the Producers. Acceptable forms of proof include (without limitation) a valid US passport or combination of valid US driver's license and valid social security card.
- II. You must be at least 21 years of age by May 1, 2010. All applicants who meet this criterion, including persons who consider themselves significantly older than 21 years of age, are welcome and encouraged to apply to be a participant.
- III. You must be in excellent physical and mental health. All applicants who believe they meet this criterion, including persons with disabilities, are welcome and encouraged to apply to be a participant.
- IV. You must not now be a candidate for public office and must agree not to become one until six months after final broadcast of all programs in which you appear, if selected as a participant.
- V. You must be willing to travel at your own expense if necessary to be interviewed in March/April (or as otherwise scheduled by the Producers) at one of the following locations nearest to you: New York City, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Detroit, MI; Atlanta, GA; Las Vegas, NV. The Producers reserve the right to change the number or the identity of the foregoing locations at any time. All travel expenses for the interview will be the applicant's sole expense.
- VI. To accept an invitation to be a finalist, you must timely complete and return the Participant Agreement Package that will be furnished to you by the Producers and will include, among other things, a Participant Agreement including release forms and waivers for review and signature by you and your family members. Additionally, any offer to become a finalist is conditioned upon your submission to psychological examinations to be conducted in Los Angeles, CA, by medical professionals selected by and paid for by the Producers and the certification of the medical professionals that you meet all physical and psychological requirements.
- VII. You must be willing to travel to Los Angeles, CA, for up to one week in May 2009 (or as otherwise scheduled by the Producers) for the final selection process. Pre-approved economy travel (roundtrip to and from Los Angeles, CA, and your home in the United States) and lodging to be provided and paid for by the Producers.
- VIII. If you are selected as a participant, you must be willing to travel to and reside at one or more undisclosed locations in the United States for up to six weeks in May/June/July (or as otherwise scheduled by the Producers). Economy travel to be paid for by the Producers.
- IX. You may not participate in the Program if your participation would create impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. In making this determination, Producers and NBC West, LLC ("NBC") will consider whether you or any of your immediate family members or anyone living in your household may be or have been within the past two (2) years employees, officers, directors or agents of any of the following: (a) Reality Worldwide, Inc., Mark Burnett Productions, Inc., any of their respective affiliated or related entities, NBC Universal, Inc., or any of its subsidiary or affiliated

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entities, including without limitation any television station owned and operated by NBC, (b) any person or entity involved in the development, production, distribution or other exploitation of the reality-based program currently entitled "The Apprentice" (the "Program") or any variation thereof, (c) Any sponsor of the Program or its advertising agency, or (d) Any person or entity supplying services or prizes to the Program. In addition, Producers reserve the right to render ineligible any person who Producers determine, in its sole discretion, is sufficiently connected with the production, administration, judging, or distribution of the Program such that his or her participation in the Program could create the appearance of impropriety.

- X. You must not have appeared as a contestant/participant in more than two (2) television competition reality-based shows within the last five (5) years from the tape date of the episode(s) of the Program in which you may appear. In addition, you may not have appeared as a contestant/participant on more than one (1) television competition reality-based show within the past twelve (12) months from the tape date of the episode(s) of the Program in which you may appear (regardless of whether such appearance has been broadcast or cablecast).

List below the names of any immediate family members or anyone living in your household who currently are or have been within the past two (2) years employees, officers, directors or agents of any of the following: (a) Reality Worldwide, Inc., Mark Burnett Productions, Inc., any of their respective affiliated or related entities, NBC Universal, Inc., or any of its subsidiary or affiliated entities, including without limitation any television station owned and operated by NBC; (b) any person or entity involved in the development, production, distribution or other exploitation of the reality-based program currently entitled "The Apprentice" (the "Program") or any variation thereof, (c) Any sponsor of the Program or its advertising agency, or (d) Any person or entity supplying services or prizes to the Program (if none, please write "None").

Please read, sign and date the following statement:

I hereby acknowledge that (i) I have read, and I meet and agree to be bound by, the eligibility requirements; (ii) I have answered the previous questions honestly and accurately; (iii) Producers may contract any individual or organization which I have listed as a reference for information about me; (iv) if any of the above information is found to be false, I understand this will be grounds for my dismissal from "The Apprentice" participant selection process and/or from "The Apprentice" program, if selected; (v) even if I meet the eligibility requirements, the Producers have no obligation to interview me and/or select me as a participant; (vi) even if I am selected as a participant, the Producers have no obligation to produce the Program and NBC West, LLC, has no obligation to broadcast it, even if produced and (vii) all decisions by the Producers concerning the selection of the participants are final and not subject to challenge or appeal.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Please sign and date the following name and likeness release:

By submitting this application, I hereby consent to the recording, use and reuse by Really Worldwide, Inc. (the "Producers") and NBC West, LLC and any of their respective licensees, assigns, parents, subsidiaries, divisions, business units or affiliated and related entities and each of their respective employees, agents, officers and directors (collectively "Releasees") of my image, voice, actions, likeness, name, appearance and biographical materials (collectively "Likeness") in any and all media now known or hereafter devised, throughout the universe, in perpetuity, in or in connection with the reality-based television series currently entitled "The Apprentice" (the "Program"). I agree that Releasees may use all or any part of my Likeness and may alter or modify it, regardless of whether or not I am recognizable. I further agree that Releasees exclusively own all right, title and interest in and to the casting video that I have provided (if any) in connection with my application to be a participant on the Program (the "Video") and all rights therein not hereto including, without limitation, the right to use the Video and my Likeness in any and all media now known or hereafter devised, throughout the universe, in perpetuity. I further agree that Releasees may use my Likeness and Video in connection with any promotion, publicity, marketing or advertisement for the Program or for any of the Releasees in any manner whatsoever. I grant the rights hereunder whether or not I am selected to participate in the Program. I release Releasees from any and all liability arising out of or any of their respective use of my Likeness and/or the Video. I agree not to make any claim against Releasees as a result of their recording or use of my Likeness and/or the Video (including, without limitation, any claim that such use invades my right to privacy and/or publicity).

This agreement is deemed entered into in Los Angeles County, California, and is governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of California applicable to agreements executed and fully carried out within California. I acknowledge that no other party nor any agent or attorney of any other party has made any promise, representation or warranty whatsoever, express or implied, not contained herein concerning the subject matter hereof, to induce me to execute this agreement and I acknowledge that I have not executed this agreement in reliance on any such promise, representation or warranty not contained herein. Any waiver by the Producers of any term of this agreement in a particular instance will not operate as a waiver of such term for the future. I agree that the invalidity or enforceability of any part of this agreement must in no way affect the validity or enforceability of any of the remainder of this agreement.

I have signed this STATEMENT and RELEASE on _____ [month] _____ [day] _____ [year]

Print Full Name _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date of Birth _____

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